HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Jesuit Educational
Center for Human Development

Anger in Spiritual Direction

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Special Formation for Formators

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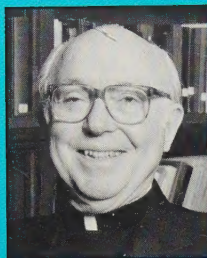**Destructive Cycles in Organizations**

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A Fresh Understanding of Power

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Seminary for Generation X

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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EDITOR'S PAGE

TOO MANY SEXUAL CASUALTIES

Several recent crashes of wide-body planes have been blamed on pilot error. These fatal accidents have raised serious questions about how today's aircraft are designed. The world's principal manufacturers of commercial jets, the Boeing and Airbus companies, have developed two radically different ways to prevent in-flight catastrophes. Both relate to the interaction between the pilot and the parts of the plane he or she can control when emergencies arise.

As described in the *New York Times* by Lawrence Zukerman, Airbus "takes a paternalistic approach. It places so-called hard limits on its pilots to protect them from themselves. The airplane's computers do not allow the pilot to pitch the plane too high or too low, to fly it too fast or to bank it beyond a 67-degree angle." Boeing, on the other hand, "gives pilots the ability to risk destroying the plane in order to save it. Computers tell pilots when they are approaching the airplane's limits, but it is left up to the captain to decide whether to exceed them." Neither system, as widely publicized disasters have revealed, has yet proved foolproof. Engineers are currently trying to find some way to combine the "soft limits" of the Boeing design with the "hard" ones featured in Airbus planes.

While thinking about the situation these engineers face, I was struck by the similarity between the problem confronting them and the task challenging the men and women engaged in the work of formation in American seminaries and religious communities. During the past few weeks, these specialists, along with their bishops and religious superiors, have been forced to question the effectiveness of the approaches to formation currently in vogue. This urgent concern was triggered by newspaper articles in the *Kansas City Star* that reported some startling information. The *Star*, having conducted a national study of priests in the United States, attracted widespread attention to a serious condition within the church when it reported that over three hundred priests in this country have already died of AIDS and that hundreds more are expected to follow in years just ahead. The *Star* has been criticized sharply for using a flawed survey methodology that enabled its writers to claim that four times as many priests as people in the general U.S. population die of AIDS.

A number of bishops have complained that the *Star* has shown an anti-Catholic or anticlerical prejudice by giving sensational publicity to its finding that most of the AIDS-related deaths in priests resulted from sexual misbehavior. Letters to the editors of newspapers in cities from coast to coast, where the articles were reprinted, have expressed the shock experienced by hundreds of readers who find it hard to accept that priests are only human and that the taking of vows does not automatically confer an ability to fulfill them flawlessly. Prominent among the reactions described in print and on radio talk shows has been the question, "What was wrong with the way these men were prepared for celibate priesthood?" Many observers have stated the opinion that celibacy is just too much for the church to ask of men today.

Some people have said that the numerous cases of sexual abuse of children by priests, along with the church's loss of hundreds of priests who have died of AIDS, prove that the sexual formation of seminarians and religious men (and perhaps women) has been incomplete. Personally, I have been asked more than a dozen times during the past few weeks, "What is the church doing now to prevent these things from happening?" I'm sure my answer is the same as that given by many American bishops and religious superiors: "In our seminaries, we are teaching our candidates for priesthood and religious life much more about human sexuality than we ever taught in the past." But in the back of my mind, while I'm saying this, I keep picturing the way sexuality was dealt with in the past as compared with how it is treated in the formation process today. Like the two different

ways of designing aircraft cockpits, the two ways of providing formation for celibate life in ministry are not—and never will be—foolproof.

Similar to the Airbus design, the old way of forming the sexuality of future priests and religious involved applying a restrictive set of controls calculated to protect the young from sinful (or simply inappropriate) behavior. The seminary or house of formation was situated a considerable distance from town. No erotic magazines, books, photographs, films, or television programs were allowed. No women were permitted on the faculty. Seminarians were not allowed to visit each other in their rooms. It was forbidden to ride alone with a woman in a car. Pastoral counseling of women had to be done in a room with a small window, diaphanously curtained, that permitted easy observation from outside. Not all of these conditions were present in every formation setting, but from what I have heard over the years, most of them were universal. The idea was to protect seminarians from harm, with the hope of fostering good habits that would last for a celibate's lifetime.

Today's seminary formation is more like the Boeing-designed cockpit. The young man is given, to paraphrase Zukerman, the ability to risk destroying himself in order to save himself. Much more freedom is granted now than in the past. Warm human friendships are encouraged with women as well as men. Classes are no longer unisex, and somewhat erotic films and literature are recommended if their content provides an educational introduction to the "real world" in which ministry will be practiced. Many houses of formation and seminaries have been moved to midtown locations; isolation from family, friends, and neighbors is no longer encouraged. Telephones, television, the Internet, and e-mail are all available. But so is the close and constant assistance of formation personnel and spiritual guides. Those in training are helped to understand themselves and their strengths and vulnerabilities with honest and accurate perceptions. They are encouraged to take responsibility for the way they live their spiritual, moral, academic, and social lives, without excessive dependence on superiors to guard and protect them. Taking risks is not out of the question. On the contrary; for those in formation today, it is an axiom that if they are to grow to full psychosexual and social maturity, encounters with somewhat risky situations are inevitable and even desirable.
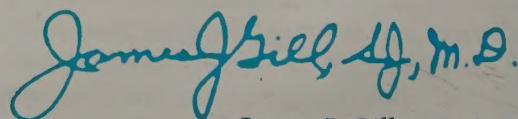
But neither the extremely protective system of the past nor the remarkably permissive formation style of today can guarantee a successful outcome in every case. There will always be some seminarians and religious who will hesitate to let their formators know them well enough to teach them to recognize their weaknesses and develop strategies to correct those weaknesses before serious temptations overwhelm them.

Too many priests who have behaved in self-destructive or other-destructive ways might have been helped earlier in their lives but passed up the opportunity. They feared being expelled from their seminary or religious congregation if their sexual difficulties were made known. Many, too, doubted their spiritual directors' and formators' ability to help them gain self-control over their sexual impulses and thus become ready for lifetime celibacy.

With regret, I would argue that the recent saddening and embarrassing misbehavior of some priests and religious is likely to continue far into the future. Why? Because too many bishops, rectors of seminaries, and religious superiors pay hardly more than lip service to the church's official insistence that those who carry the responsibility of forming our future ministers should be well prepared—that is, informed and formed—for their task. What makes me so certain that more formation for formators is needed than is currently being sought? Simply the fact that five years ago, when the media were repeatedly reporting cases of clergy sexual misconduct, some of us felt compelled to found the Christian Institute for the Study of Human Sexuality. Our aim has been to make sure that bishops, seminary rectors, and religious superiors have at least one place in the United States where they can send their formators and spiritual directors to learn enough about human sexuality and training for celibacy to eventually effect a drastic reduction in the amount of sexual misconduct by members of the clergy. But most of the dioceses and religious congregations we have wanted to help have failed, for some reason, to make use of the one-of-a-kind program we provide with the help of philanthropic Catholic foundations and generous benefactors who recognize the urgent need for it.

This is not an advertisement. It is an expression of my deep concern. Fifteen or twenty years from now, when the media are still reporting frequent cases of sexual misbehavior by priests, I don't want bishops and religious superiors to be forced to explain to their insurance companies—as well as to interviewers from *20/20* and *60 Minutes*—their reasons for not having insisted that their seminary personnel get enough training to bring an end to the too many sexual casualties we see the church suffering these days.

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

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Editor-in-Chief

A Fresh Look at Corporate Power

George B. Wilson, S.J.

In my experience, religious are skittish when it comes to talk of power. It's odd, when you think about it, because they love to talk about mission. And being on a mission—something quite different from having a mission statement, after all—is about collective power: the ability of a body of people to imagine and achieve things together that none of them could achieve in isolation. How can power be bad and having a mission be good? In order to untangle this misunderstanding, we need to explore some basic assumptions about power.

Let us begin with a foundational assumption. Power, in Ignatian language, is a creature: good in itself, given to created beings by a trusting God. Of course, it is obvious that power (like all other creatures) is capable of being abused, but that tragic reality does not take away from its basic goodness. This is an important anchor for the discussion that follows, because many people have experienced such abuses of power in their lives that they draw the false conclusion that the possession of power itself is evil. Much spiritual mischief has been sown through faulty presentations of the virtue of humility, which are actually based on this unexamined assumption. To identify the abuse of power with power itself, and as a consequence to avoid assuming and employing the power with which we are endowed as creatures,

is to reject the gift of a loving creator. It is an act not of humility but of a subtle form of pride.

We might be inclined to view power as bad for another reason. As Americans, we are culturally conditioned to conceive of power only in terms of political or economic structures: to have power involves either making the decisions that affect the life of the community (whether that community be small or large) or managing the resources by which it carries out those decisions. We can hear the results of this conditioning in everyday expressions. Common complaints of ineffective people in both societal and ecclesial settings are "I can't do anything; they make all the decisions" or "What can I do? They control the purse strings." When people assume that political or economic structures are the only source of power and find themselves excluded from those structures, it is easy to conclude that power is bad because "they" have it.

Such limited perspectives on the nature of power overlook a much more fundamental reality. The power of any organization—its ability to make a difference in its world—is ultimately imputed to it by its members and the outsiders who are touched by it. The corporate enterprise has only the power that people are willing to concede to it in their lives. And people concede such power in virtue of their

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perception of its meaning for them. If an aborigine were to see an American football game for the first time, he or she would experience the same nonimpact that the aborigine's rituals would have on a First World person who had no sense of their meaning. The Ku Klux Klan loses all its power if those around it treat it with scorn or if its own members begin to find it meaningless and opt out. The way a corporate enterprise is perceived becomes the key to its actual power.

The point becomes clear if you imagine someone inviting you into some collective experience. If you perceive it to be beneficent in your regard, you welcome it and give it scope (read: power) to have an impact on you. If you view it as noxious, you withdraw and shield yourself from letting it affect you. Finally, if you perceive it as meaningless, the other projects that do give you meaning will fill your personal screen, and the venture in question will in effect become nonexistent for you, having no power in your regard.

All well and good, but where do we find all these perceptions that are so important to a group's actual power? When a host of people perceive and experience a particular group as helpful and are therefore willing to support and promote it, where do they put

all those perceptions? How do their positive (or negative) valuations coalesce?

In its name.

As a biblical people, we have been schooled to relate power and names. We understand, for example, the transfer of power that takes place when God, for example, renames Abram, or when Jesus calls Simon Peter "Rock." We know that the name bespeaks a conferral of power. It is important for us to move beyond those individual names and reflect on the rich implications of the names we bear collectively, as Christians, as Catholics, or as members of the Brothers of Holy Joy. Genuine power accrues to the individuals in a corporate enterprise, such as a religious community or even the church itself, through the name of that enterprise.

How can that be? Because corporate endeavors acquire the power to affect people through networks of human communication, and in those networks the group's name is crucial. Say "IBM" and a whole host of responses are inevitably evoked in people (as is easily seen if, instead of IBM, you were to say "the XYZ Corporation"). A group's name has all the power of an icon, because it sums up and holds within itself all the actions of the present members as well as those of their predecessors, as perceived by the surrounding society. A group's name is like an atom into which a whole host of energies has been bundled, or a diamond that is capable of so many hues because of a solidifying process that took place over centuries.

In order to put in a more experiential form what I am trying to express in these inadequate concepts and images, I trust that the reader will allow me some first-person narrative. While talking concretely about myself and the Jesuit community of which I am a member, readers can make the necessary applications to their own experiences.

ACCESS TO POWER

When I meet another person or group and am asked to identify myself, I respond by declaring that I am a Jesuit, and an extraordinary thing happens. Consciously or unconsciously, and depending on the person's range of experience with Jesuits, I can be seen as one with a whole host of enormously significant persons, known and unknown. In the psyche of the people I am meeting, I may be associated with a Francis Xavier or a Peter Canisius; perhaps more immediately with a John Courtney Murray, Pedro Arrupe, or Horace McKenna; perhaps with some confessor or spiritual director who accompanied one of these people through some life-transforming conversion; or perhaps with a teacher who saw potential in one of them and patiently enabled the young

woman to believe in her gifts or the young man to put his pain at the service of someone else.

I am empowered by all these preconscious associations; the gifts, the accomplishments, the commitment and zeal of these brothers of mine accrue to me. The name introduces me into this new setting, not as some lonely autonomous individual having to break into the situation on my own, but as a bearer of a heritage. The corporate history wrought in all these men is present with me as soon as the word "Jesuit" is spoken. All that bundled energy I mentioned earlier is present and active in the interchange.

I may not personally know the individuals whose lives and deeds are creating this space for me. I may not even know who is being referred to when I hear their names mentioned. Their life in the Society of Jesus may have ended long before or after mine began. There is a high likelihood, given our mobile society, that I have never lived under the same roof with most of these men who lend power to my impact. I would be less than honest if I did not add that I am also, as a result of this association, identified with men with whom I would probably disagree violently on all sorts of issues; with men whose basic ideologies are inimical to my vision of what God is about in our world; and with oddballs, cranks, and assorted neurotics whose certifiability depends only on who does the certifying.

I need to add that it is cause for great joy that, as a result of many different efforts to invite those attracted by the Ignatian vision to join us more visibly as colleagues and partners, the gifts and labors and accomplishments of many who are not Jesuits are also riches at my disposal. I am canonically "Jesuit," but I also draw power from the broader circle of all those with whom I identify as "Ignatian."

The point is that through this mysterious process, I am more than myself. Those persons or groups who meet me under the designation "Jesuit" (or, as the experience is broadened, "Ignatian") are predisposed, are ready to grant me a hearing, an initial acceptance, a chance—some sort of new possibility of making an impact in their world. The name not only gives access to power; it is power.

NAMES AND POWER

Names, such as "Jesuit," are not neutral quantities. They can open doors or close them. A name like "Society of Jesus" is not just some collocation of letters or sounds. It carries the deeds of countless men who bore it; their vision and the ways they incarnated it or failed to; the effects, for good or ill, that they have had on individuals and the social systems to which they have belonged. We should view such a name as being on the order of an icon, bearing all the energy that a physical icon is mysteriously capable of containing.

The name becomes crystallized, within the collective psyche of the surrounding publics, as a reputation that precedes the entry of the individual upon the stage. It generates in people expectations that are subtly different from those the same publics might have of anyone not identified with the particular corporate body so named.

And those expectations, like all expectations, are a form of power. If the person's or group's experience of me confirms their predisposition, the icon "Jesuit" becomes all the stronger; if not, the power of the name is diminished. The easiest way to grasp the connection between expectations and power is simply to imagine what happens when expectations have been built up but the subsequent performance fails to measure up to the anticipation generated. In such a situation, people are disappointed because they were already "appointed" in a particular direction; there is an experience of disorientation. The world they had unconsciously created for themselves turned out to be illusory (we also say people are disillusioned); reality was less reliable than their anticipation of it. They had not read the situation accurately and will now be a bit less sure of their judgments in approaching new individuals carrying the same name.

REPUTATION'S LATEST BEARER

We need now to situate more carefully the kind of power we are talking about—what it does and what it does not do. The Jesuit reputation, arising from this myriad of great and not-so-great men and their countless deeds—although it is a genuine power that opens doors and creates possibility for the individual Jesuit—does not substitute for the responsibility that he alone bears for his use of that power, for the way he will perform once the stage has been offered to him.

The apostolic community of the Society of Jesus does not do the individual Jesuit's work for him. The group, through its name and the hearer's experience of those who bear it, confers the power, the potential. It opens a door, as it were. But whether or not the man's deeds live up to the empowerment provided for him by others depends not on those forebears but on the individual himself. His deeds and the spirit in which he offers them can either live up to the measure already established or, at the opposite extreme, disabuse people of the esteem in which they had held people called "Jesuit." The individual who bears the name enjoys all its benefits but also bears responsibility for its continued meaning and even enhance-

> **Each time the message of companionship rather than achievement gets through to another person, the name "Jesuit" is enhanced and the rest of the brothers have greater power to advance the mission we all share**

ment. Having been gifted with such power from his forebears, the individual is called equally to contribute, by his performance, to the empowerment of those Jesuits presently surrounding him and to enhance the potential of those who will bear the name after him. Having received the name and thus become more than himself, the way he carries its energies, either enhancing or diminishing them, will increase or limit the potential of the name.

RESPONSIBILITY TO COMMUNITY

To review a bit:

1) An apostolic community gathers in order to achieve things that the individuals who constitute it could not achieve on their own.
2) The community achieves this multiplication by creating corporate power, with which it endows each member.
3) That empowerment is located in the common name, which carries the performance of all who have preceded the individual in the community.
4) The surrounding world consciously or unconsciously attributes to the individual the heritage of the group as embodied in the name.
5) By virtue of the name, the individual enjoys, even prior to his own first action, genuine potential

he would not have possessed without the enjoyment of the name.
6) What he does with the empowerment created for him by the name will affect the level of empowerment granted to those who will bear the name after him.

Given these premises, one can reasonably conclude that a prime responsibility of the individual apostolic religious to his or her companions (whether they belong to the canonical body or are identified with the same charism) is serious commitment to the development and enhancement of the member's capabilities for whatever apostolic work the member is called to engage in. Work at the increase and development of one's apostolic competence is not merely a matter of personal choice; it may be the defining requisite for demonstrating commitment to the community of apostles one has joined. Other men's or women's labors have empowered the individual member; that member's basic contribution is to provide the same service for companions present and future. The life and work of this individual become the vehicle through which the other members too can achieve more than each might through his or her own autonomous efforts.

To name one programmatic consequence: "continuing education and formation" is not simply a personal luxury for an apostolic religious; it is the member's contribution to a corporate imperative. If the quality of service offered by the individual members of the group declines, so does the power entrusted to the collective body by its publics—and so, accordingly, does the body's capacity to open doors for its future individual members.

EFFICIENCY OR SUCCESS?

The focus I have placed on empowerment, and therefore on the individual's responsibility for untiring effort at developing his or her competence, should not be misread as an example of some sort of American fixation on success. It is simply a recognition of the nature of corporate enablement of the individual: through the phenomenon of a name and reputation, we members will inevitably affect one another, for good or ill. But the possibility that one might hear "success" in all this does suggest that it might be profitable to explore the dynamics of empowerment at a deeper level.

When people initially welcome, say, a Jesuit with a readiness to identify him with Jesuits they have personally esteemed, what are they recognizing and celebrating? The question invites us to the recognition that our reputation, the expectations people

have of us, can be based on two different sources.

In the case of people who have no personal history of interacting with any particular Jesuit, we are of necessity dealing with that larger reputation grounded in the exploits of Jesuits who created significant public impact, either globally or at least in their own country. The Xaviers or Riccis or Bollandists or Hopkinses—men recognized and celebrated for accomplishments of great distinction in their field of apostolic expression; for success, if you will. A similar thing can be said of the great institutions that have enhanced the name of the Society of Jesus for centuries. Although the individuals who taught in them are now largely faceless, they accomplished together the creation of works that had significant effects on the lives of many. In that sense they were successful, effective. That effectiveness and societal impact is recognized by people who know of these works, and it shapes their initial openness when they actually meet a Jesuit for the first time.

Another dynamic is present in the case of those who have had prior personal contact with individual Jesuits and transfer that experience to the accord they give in an encounter with a new Jesuit. Here it becomes clear that we are dealing with something more subtle than successful or effective performance, much less with things like brilliance or panache.

When someone meets and interacts with a Jesuit, they are not encountering simply a talent or skill, or even a collection of talents or skills, although those things are ingredients in the experience. What is encountered is, of course, a whole person. And that includes inadequacies and shortcomings and bumbling, underdevelopment and stuntedness and tragic flaws of all kinds. Most important, it includes the way the individual Jesuit deals with such things.

Listen to people recalling a Jesuit they knew, someone who clearly made a positive impact on them. The particularities of the story may include references to things like style or success in some field of endeavor, but behind the particularities you will hear things like integrity and authenticity, a genuine struggle with the human condition, confrontation with failure and inadequacy and sinfulness, a care for others that takes precedence over the Jesuit's own personal issues of consolation or desolation. To use terms that are at risk of becoming glib clichés, we might with cautious temerity say that people see in such a Jesuit a "man for others"—someone who knows he is "a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus."

Individual Jesuits, then, empower their brothers—open doors for them—by bringing to those they meet their flawed-but-hopeful selves and their attention to and service of others, which include the competence to be of service. Each of the Society's members should not only work at being a better teacher or spiritual director or researcher or pastor or artist; he should also always try to be a more genuine companion to the pilgrims met along the way. Each time the message of companionship rather than achievement gets through to another person, the name "Jesuit" is enhanced and the rest of the brothers have greater possibility, greater power to advance the mission we all share together.

A FINAL NOTE

Apostolic religious in today's church direct fewer and fewer institutions owned or even sponsored by their community. For some, that is cause for lament; for others, reason for rejoicing. The question can be matter for good debate; on such things reasonable people may differ. But whether or not we carry on our mission through corporate works, we need to be aware that ultimately, what makes all the difference is the empowerment that we as individual members create for one another through the way we embody all the expectations contained in our name. It is at once our rich privilege and our weighty responsibility. We are more than our isolated selves.
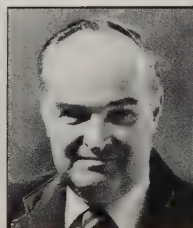
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Destructive Cycles in Organizations

Joanne Marie Greer, Ph.D.

The detached observer of "do-good" organizations, whether religious or secular, can notice that over time, their effectiveness tends to ebb and flow. When these organizations hit rock bottom, they may also hit the front page of the newspaper. For example, in the past five years, at least four administrators of nonprofit organizations were convicted of embezzling in order to fund their extravagant lifestyles. Two of these were heads of United Way charities, the third was the trusted and admired treasurer of a religious denomination, and the fourth was the presiding bishop of yet another religious denomination. This kind of ruin can be documented with a balance sheet. Other kinds of ruin, such as sexual abuse of children and seduction of adults, also have protocols for documentation. This article addresses the more subtle forms of destruction to which idealistic and spiritually motivated organizations are especially vulnerable.

DESTRUCTIVE VS. INEFFECTIVE

It is important to distinguish destructiveness from sheer ineffectiveness, which has a random quality. The ineffective person lacks either sufficient information or sufficient skills to use information effectively. Efficiency expert Laurence J. Peter has written extensively on such people. One of his insights is that organizations tend to promote persons who are effective at a less prestigious position to a more prestigious position that requires completely different sets of information and skills. Peter terms this "rising to the level of one's incompetence." So, for example, a star journalist may lack the broad community knowledge, leadership skills, or critical judgment needed in an effective editor.

The ineffective person consistently fails to hit the mark when aiming for a laudable outcome, which he or she might be sincerely seeking. Ineffectiveness may develop in a person previously effective. For example, in the 1960s a revered and elderly mother superior periodically confused her very traditional community by issuing random, irrational commands. Furthermore, on some days she did not remember the basic data of the workgroup (e.g., she would instruct the school principal on her duties as cook or address one sister by another's name). On one occasion she sent some sisters on a week's vacation and then recalled them the next day. However, these lapses were not sufficiently frequent that anyone had the confidence or courage to report the situation to higher authorities. With hindsight and current medical knowledge, we can guess that she was probably in the beginning phases of Alzheimer's disease. She

was certainly ineffective, and she certainly caused tension and anxiety, but she lacked the purposive quality of the destructive person.

In contrast, the destructive person is most often extremely effective at accomplishing covert goals. These goals remain hidden because ruthlessness is often paired with the chameleon capacity of the "as if" personality. Such individuals have the capacity to adopt, as necessary, the surface characteristics of the ideal job candidate, the ideal colleague, the ideal subordinate—but these characteristics are not predictive of their future behavior. In the succinct terms of a popular African American expression, they talk the talk but don't walk the walk. Helene Deutch, in her original proposal of the term "'as if' personality," actually chose one of her case descriptions from a religious setting. She described an adolescent girl who was the most pious of all the pupils in her convent school, but when she returned home she became the most flighty and dissipated of her debutante group. Having no stable personality, she could transform herself completely when she changed context.

DARK SIDE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The founder of object relations theory, Melanie Klein, saw clearly that not only are human beings relational but that sometimes the relationships they are drawn toward are characterized by envy, hatred, and destructiveness. Her colleagues Donald W. Winnicot and W. Ronald Fairbairn also acknowledged the importance of this dark side of the relational heart. Winnicott even went so far as to exhort therapists to pay attention to their hatred for their clients. It is interesting that these aspects of object relations theory are rather studiously avoided by most religious people, who are enthusiasts for object-relations concepts. It is easier for religious people to think and talk about internal needs for love and intimacy than to think and talk about internal needs to degrade and destroy. Yet it is fairly dangerous to play ostrich about one's own destructiveness or that of others.

It is impossible to deal effectively with an interpersonal reality if one cannot accept the evidence that the reality exists. I have found that my clients who are particularly ethical or idealistic often get stuck for long periods in sheer disbelief over a colleague's or supervisor's subtle destructive behavior. "Surely it can't be so," they reason. "I simply haven't figured out how to collaborate effectively with this person; I must try harder to explain the issues/to clarify why this approach is best/to get them to buy into the good things we have been doing here."

This disbelief in the continuing stream of evidence shakes their confidence in their own judgment, or even their confidence in their own good will. The psychologically sophisticated begin to search for their own hidden transferences: "Is he too much like my older brother/Is she too much like my mother?" They even move on to questioning the evidence of their own senses: "Perhaps I am misinterpreting the situation; perhaps I am being too sensitive/too defensive." The deeply religious person may move on to questioning his or her own spirituality: "Perhaps I am too attached to my own vision; perhaps I am refusing to see God's hand in this person's behavior."

There are grains of truth in all this self-examination. Under the continuing stress of what appears to be an irrational attack on the self or on a loved work, the well-intentioned neurotic is accumulating an internal pressure cooker of rage. Sooner or later there probably will be an explosion. Paradoxically, if the anger is openly and effectively expressed, a guilt attack is likely to follow. The insight that brought the anger to the surface now slips through the fingers, and the sufferer reverts to searching for ways in which he or she may be responsible for the frustrating deterioration in the workplace. These self-attacks gradually lead to depression and a complicated mourning process over the loss of fulfilling work.

A common fantasy at this point is the neutralization of the destructive person. There is a hope that authorities will see the destructive process and intervene. Letters may be written to potential rescuers. For example, government employees will turn to the whistleblowing strategy and make calls or send letters to congressional offices. Monks may write to the general of the order. Frustrated parishioners may write to the bishop. Frustrated teachers may call the central office. It would be nice if these efforts were well received. For a variety of reasons, they often are not. A series of painful interactions or personal attacks may have so regressed the complainant that he or she appears to be an unbalanced troublemaker. Or the authorities being appealed to would suffer a loss of face by admitting that they have made an error in judgment, that they have been manipulated, or that they have placed the wrong person in a job. Sometimes they reason that rapid removal of even a disastrously bad performer would not be in the overall best interests of the organization. And sometimes intervening is simply too much work for someone who is already overburdened with pressing concerns.

The failure of appeals for help is likely to further destabilize what were once productive workers. The destructive person may have been questioned regarding the complaint and may react with either hurt or rage. Vast amounts of energy are consumed in mulling over events and in self-justification. Perhaps some group members regress to the point of wishing

to deliberately sabotage their own group's work. Even an animal will "foul its own nest" to protest frustrating changes in its emotional environment. I saw a demonstration of this years ago when I had to leave my pet cat in the care of someone who did not like cats. Abandoned and furious, the cat persistently did her daily biological business under the dining table until my return. Emotionally battered team members may unconsciously revenge themselves in much the same manner.

When authorities become aware that a situation is unsalvageable, one strategy is to transfer all involved—both the complainants and the object of the complaints. While this appears to punish the innocent, it may be the best outcome in the long run. By the time authorities make a formal intervention, a previously functioning community may be irreversibly destroyed, and it may be difficult to find any innocents. Everyone may have bought into a pathological situation and unconsciously adapted to it in order to survive. I once worked in a training center in which it became necessary for the leadership to remove the entire training team. I had been one of the whistleblowers, but to my great relief, I learned that I was only one of many. I was assigned to remain behind for six months as a practical informant to a new team arriving to take over. Their many queries about former practices slowly made me aware of just how deep and wide was the damage to the workgroup's mission. I also became aware that I had not been able to see the full extent of the damage because of my own entrenched defense of turning my attention away from distressing incidents. Only the challenge of the newcomers' questions made me focus on the emotional and spiritual consequences of what had occurred.

DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP

How does the destructive person reach a position of power in an idealistic, well-intentioned group? This is a complex question. The idealistic tend to think that all companions are like themselves. Since they themselves would seek a position of power or authority only after soul-searching and careful self-evaluation, they tend to think that this is how all others in the group will proceed. This mindset interferes with discernment. In a review of a recent biography of Stalin, the writer remarked that the reason Stalin and not Trotsky rose to the top was that Trotsky believed the most qualified person would lead the USSR, while Stalin understood clearly that the top position would go to the most ruthless person. Stalin not only defeated and exiled the more competent Trotsky but also had him assassinated.

Destructive phases in an organization's life are not always traceable to only the official leaders of the group. Scholars of organizational behavior distinguish between the formal and informal power structures in organizations. An organization with a weak leader and a strong informal power structure is easily led astray from its publicly proclaimed mission. The official, publicly accountable leader can be diffident, easily influenced, overburdened, or in ill health. Or perhaps he or she enjoys generating visionary ideas but hates the tedium of their implementation and is eager to delegate the actual management. Such leaders create a power vacuum, which may be filled by hard-working, charismatic individuals with their own agendas. These individuals can gradually become the informal power brokers of the organization.

Why is this a problem? Informal power brokers can redirect the organization's course to new goals without submitting to the traditional discernment processes. Less imaginative persons who become swept up in another's charismatic vision, as well as those who are emotionally dependent, easily accept such informal leaders. These easy followers abdicate adult responsibility for the hard work of discussion and consensus. More independent thinkers, who feel robbed of a role and are left voiceless in the general wave of enthusiasm, are likely to disengage, either literally or figuratively.

Sometimes a newly arrived leader appears bent on destroying a previously effective work group. What could motivate such behavior? And why does an established leader checkmate all ideas but his or her own? Looked at from the outside, the perpetrator of such actions appears mad. Klein was fascinated by this problem, perhaps because she saw that the psychoanalytic movement of which she was a part was cannibalizing itself with successive waves of competitive envy. Sigmund Freud nurtured both the young Alfred Adler and the young Carl Jung, then cast them out angrily when their theoretical writing threatened to establish them as his peers. Freud's envy of Klein's brilliant work with children led him to see her not as a valued young colleague but only as a competitor to his daughter Anna—and Anna's love for her father led her to continue his attacks on Klein after his death. Klein had plenty of live raw material on which to develop her theories of envy, destructiveness, hatred, and guilt.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

When all is said and done, how can one respond effectively to an organization that has turned destructive to one's selfhood after perhaps years of fulfilling work? I am always awed by the sufferer's reluctance

to let go of meaningful work. The mourning that takes place is similar to that for a lost love. The emotional pathway is interrupted by reversals, by belated efforts to try yet again to make things work. But the healthy person eventually realizes the need to close doors, preserve the self, and move on.

One such sufferer was the founding chair of a new academic department. She had recruited the faculty and students, developed the curriculum, and shepherded the program through two different professional accreditations. Throughout the years of this process, she enjoyed the personal friendship and enthusiastic support of her dean. The chair was shocked and disbelieving when the dean, who was of her own academic discipline, began to savage the department as soon as the accreditation documents were in hand. Faculty salaries were cut, some faculty were dismissed and replaced, and the chair's routine decisions were labeled insubordination. A year later, most of the faculty the chair had hired were gone. She herself had been dismissed on a technicality and replaced by a newly minted Ph.D. She had truly loved her work and suffered greatly. At the same time, she was so angry and hurt that she realized her effectiveness had been permanently damaged. It was best for the program she created and loved that she move on. Because she often quoted the Bible, I said to her, "Shake their dust from your sandals." She replied, "That's a good one, but I have a better one. I'm like Lot's wife. At this point if I look back I will turn into a pillar of salt. I won't be able to function, much less grow. I have to let go now, for my own sake."

FACING PARADOX IMPORTANT

In so-called primitive cultures there is more open acknowledgment that envy, hatred, and competitiveness are common human problems. In more than one ethnic group, the mother of a young baby keeps it carefully covered in public because her people believe that the envious stares of other women will make the baby sick. One indigenous Mexican Indian group had a custom of passing a raw egg over the body of a sleeping child, to remove the envy and hatred to which he or she had been exposed during the day. Talismans to fend off the evil eye—the envious or hate-filled gaze—are found in many cultures and are probably the predecessors of medals and crosses worn on the person. Old Testament stories focus on these painful and destructive emotions—for example, the story of Solomon's judgment regarding which of the two women was the true mother of the live infant, the story of Cain and Abel, the story of Esau and Jacob.

We too easily turn our attention away from such knowledge. We find it hard to approach coworkers with openness yet to be simultaneously aware that the interpersonal transaction may develop a dark side. Perhaps it was this paradox that Jesus was addressing when he exhorted us to be as wise as serpents yet as simple as doves.

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The Priestly Formation of Generation X

John C. Kemper, S.S.

The old maxim "Clothes make the man" still echoes in the minds and hearts of many today. I believe this popular saying from the past contains a hermeneutic of truth. We may need to put a more contemporary and inclusive spin on that time-honored adage, changing it to "Clothes make the person." What a person wears can determine how he or she is received initially and to what extent he or she is made privy to certain situations and experiences. I have spent most of my educational life in Catholic schools, in which growing up with a school uniform or a dress code is a common and accepted part of life. Interestingly, in recent years many public school systems have adopted student dress codes. Maybe the public sector learned something from parochial education.

Dress codes, written and unwritten, are more common than we might think. One need only walk down Wall Street or take a look at the business world to see the unwritten dress code of the men and women who broker the world's finances, or look at those who work in the halls of justice to help maintain our legal system. Certainly, what we wear communicates something about us to the world: what we believe in, what we hold dear. For example, it is not uncommon to see individuals sporting the colors or logos of their favorite teams or schools.

Today we witness a transition of the dress code from the boardroom, the courtroom, and the playing field to the world of the religious imagination. More and more individuals are communicating their commitment to a system of religious beliefs by what they wear. This highly visible expression of faith takes place on many levels. On a national level, we have witnessed religious women donning habits characteristic of thirty years past—a new phenomenon that extends to young people in religious life and formation today. It is not uncommon to find members of "Generation X" (those born between 1961 and 1981) wearing religious objects and articles of clothing that communicate their commitment to religious life as they understand it. Recently, in an airport waiting area, I saw a young man in his early twenties wearing a t-shirt with the image of a cross on the front; it stated, in bold letters, "THE CROSS: more than jewelry." For those members of Generation X who are believers, being a witness to their beliefs is important to them. In the August 1999 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Ted Halstead, writing on "A Politics for Generation X," noted that "today's young are returning to religion, . . . many [who] grew up without a formal religion are actively searching for a moral compass to guide their lives, and a recent poll suggests that the highest priority for the majority of young adults is

building a strong and close-knit family." There seems to be a quality in the members of Generation X that cries out for heightened visibility and distinctness from others. Their unconventional hairstyles and creative use of body piercing demonstrate the Xers' desire to be noticed. This is likewise true for Xers who are faith-filled. Contemporary religious imagination has truly had a workout through their creative energy. From the religious imagery used in MTV music videos to the contemporary reinterpretations of classical religious images by GenX artists, the religious-minded Xers, like their generational counterparts, want to be noticed. Their highly visible and provocative agenda is witnessed by members of their generation currently in formation for ordination.

Being a witness in the world of the transcendent nature of God is very important for some Xers in religious formation. This public witness is often expressed by what they wear. Albert DiIanni, S.M., notes that in the past, diocesan seminarians and young religious strove greatly by their actions to be "the invisible leaven in the dough" (*America*, 2/28/98). This new generation of diocesan seminarians and religious seems to have a heightened visibility in the church, often expressed through what they wear—whether a cross, a Christian symbol ring, a congregational logo, or a religious habit. Recently, in chapel at the seminary where I am in residence, I was distracted by a student wearing a t-shirt that read, "Ten Reasons to Become a Priest." This prompted me to become more aware of what students in formation are wearing these days, both within the diocesan seminary and in religious communities. A growing number of young men in formation are wearing articles of clothing that would set them apart from other students their age. My observations have led me to explore more deeply the religious formation process of GenX candidates for ordained ministry. In the process, I had to ask myself: Is Generation X presenting a new paradigm for priestly formation or simply a wardrobe change that is returning us to the past?

AN EXPLORATORY GROUP

I invited six seminarians—three diocesan students and three members of religious congregations—to participate in a focus group to talk about their experience of being in formation and what their generation is looking for from the formation process and from the church. All of the six seminarians were born in the United States and are members of Generation X. I found the discussion to be honest and forthright and came away from it energized and hopeful. The focus group agreed on several points.

Each generation has its icons—images that communicate more about the generation than about the image itself. For example, from the Great Depression, generational icons include the image of the massive soup lines and the familiar phrase "Brother, can you spare a dime?" For members of the Baby Boomer generation, icons include the first human footprint on the moon and images from Woodstock and the Vietnam conflict. Generational icons capture and communicate the spirit of the times.

The members of the focus group were asked to name what they considered icons for their generation. The responses were as varied as the participants themselves. Some themes, however, transcended their individualism to create a commonality in their response.

Individualism. Almost unanimously, the focus group noted the spirit of individualism as a quality that has become synonymous with Generation X. The two prime examples of how individualism is articulated within that generation were in the areas of education and child care. The respondents noted that members of their generation approach the educational system with a mentality of "What is this education going to do for me?" Xers seem to have relatively little altruistic motivation when selecting an educational future. Likewise, within educational systems, more highly focused curricula are being developed around particular tasks or functions. Gone are the days of pursuing a liberal arts education simply to become a more well-rounded individual. The focus group also connected the individualism within their generation to the fact that many Xers were "latchkey kids." An attempt on the part of parents to have both family and career produced a whole generation of children who came home to empty homes or had the experience of being raised in daycare. One respondent noted that he grew up as a "latchkey kid" and that for him, one of the major challenges of community living has been entering into a shared life with others. He noted that he had to learn how to sit at table for a community meal. During his youth, he and his family sat down together for a meal only once or twice a month.

Consumerism. As one respondent noted, Generation X "wants it all." The group concurred that Xers tend to make personal judgments based on what people have rather than who they are. For example, it is important to be dressed in the right clothing. Some of the more "preppie" Xers define themselves by the design standards of the Gap, Guess, Eddie Bauer, and others. Within this area of consumerism, almost all the respondents noted that theirs is a tech-

Generation Xers' theological understanding of the church includes a strong sense of their mission to be transformative agents within the church

nological generation—the first to be comfortable with the personal computer for both education and recreation. Xers grew up with computer-generated images in their toys and games, from PacMan to Nintendo. With the rapid growth in technology, newer, faster, and more realistic computer-generated images became the driving force behind the rapid pace of consumerism in this area.

Technology. The notion of a technological generation stands on its own as an icon for Generation X. This is the first generation that feels a sense of comfort with the personal computer and all the technological advances made by the previous generation. Most Xers grew up in front of a monitor, with a joystick, tracker ball, or keyboard in their hands. They have a command of a new language and a new means of communication: at the push of a button or the click of a mouse, electronic mail can be sent around the world or around the block in a flash. Xers are designing the road maps of the information highway for future generations. We cannot underestimate the vastness of the information that the Internet places at the fingertips of those who "surf" it. On line, an Xer seminary student can access a new document from the Vatican's website and read the text or download it for later use even before the Vatican has it published in print for worldwide distribution.

Rubik's Cube. One seminarian noted that in the future, when the history of Generation X is told, Rubik's Cube may be seen as one of its icons. As he expressed it, "The popularity of this toy may be saying something about the generation's attempting to find clarity in the chaos of life." He observed that Xers are struggling to make sense of many situations they inherited from past generations, including the moral chaos and egotism of the seventies and eighties.

Media Mania. Several students in the focus group noted the role and influence of television and the media on the lives of Xers. One student noted that the television was the babysitter for many GenX kids and often their sole companion. One recent study estimated that the average child watches forty hours of television a week. The focus group singled out MTV as an "entertainment format" that captured the consciousness of Generation X. One student, who had majored in marketing and communications, pointed out that all three forms of mass communication—television, radio, and newspapers—gravitate toward the sensational and dramatic in order to capture a viewing audience. He raised the concern that the media create or shape the culture by the news they choose to report.

SYSTEM SEARCHING

The group expressed concern that present seminary formation has failed to find a new model to address the unique needs of the GenX candidate. They noted that the "hothouse"model of the seminary system of the 1940s and 1950s had been discarded years ago, but the "everything's up for grabs" model of the late 1960s through the early 1980s did not work either. The candidates in seminary formation in the 1990s and, presumably, those of the future will come with an agenda and concerns quite different from those of any previous generation. Many already come to the seminary from other disciplines that process information differently. For example, one student from the business world noted that "at times there seems to be a lack of a . . . systematic approach to priestly formation." Another student asked, "What training does a seminary formator get to assist the student in the task of seminary formation?" He observed that within his community it seems that the only requirement to become a formation person is good will and the willingness to engage in the task. This concern was echoed by the others and seemed to confirm for the focus group that much of seminary formation today is in a system-searching mode.

NEW SYNTHESIS OF IDENTITY

Sense and Mission Within the Church. One of the seminary students from a religious community

stated that there needs to be a new synthesis of identity for the priest today. He said that during the 1940s and 1950s there had been a strong group identity within his congregation. In the 1960s and 1970s there was a strong push to discard the group identity and move toward a more individual approach to identity as a religious within the congregation. He thought this movement became problematic for many religious communities and spoke of a need for a new synthesis of identity—a synthesis that needs to be in concert with every aspect of a person's life but not restricted to one's role or function as priest or religious. A diocesan seminary student expressed a similar point of view, noting, "I don't want to go back to the old movies where women came up and kissed the hands of the priest, nor do I want to go back to the generation where priestly identity needed to hyphenate their existence to have meaning. Nor do I want to be like some of this present generation who are embarrassed by their priestly identity." The issue of a new synthesis of priestly identity was important to the focus group, and much of the conversation centered on priestly attire—a subject that sparked a rather heated discussion. The question of how one can be a witness to the Kingdom of God in the world without having some outward sign of participation in religious life was of almost unanimous concern. One student remarked that as a vowed religious, it is important for him to wear his clerical collar when he engages in official ministerial activity. This outward public witness to his vowed life as a religious did not seem unreasonable or questionable to the other members of the focus group.

One student was quick to state that the focus group was not supporting a "Back to the Future" approach to seminary formation. He observed that Xers are the recipients of many of the liberties fought for within the church of the 1960s and early 1970s—liberties and freedoms that they both enjoy and cherish. He believed that the focus group was advocating not a return to the past but a better, more balanced understanding of priestly identity. As one student said, "We in formation are reacting to the seventies, but we would be fooling ourselves if we did not honestly say that we are using the same methodologies of that era. The need to express who we are is important to us. You see the crosses and rings we wear, and we are free to do that because other generations earned that freedom for us." The same student spoke of his first encounter with a "punk rocker" in junior high school, which caused internal confusion: he was simultaneously disgusted by her lack of conformity and impressed by her courage and inner freedom.

SENSE OF REDISCOVERY

The image of the church and how the GenX seminarian envisions himself is of the utmost importance when considering the overall formational process. Much of the literature on the seminary formation of Xers indicates that they see themselves as strongly countercultural. An article in the *New York Times Magazine* (4/4/99) spotlighted those in seminary formation for Roman Catholic priesthood as "The Last Counterculture." Interestingly, two-thirds of the seminarians in the focus group noted the need to be a countercultural agent within their generation. Seminarians today are coming into formation with a mission in mind: to be a transformative influence within their generation, their culture, and their church.

One respondent remarked that his experience of his generation within formation is that they are "more conservative in their religious views . . . many have had some significant conversion experience . . . many are intelligent and look to Catholic heroes like John Paul II and Mother Teresa . . . they have experienced and often are reacting to 'Catholic bashing' with a form of Catholic pride . . . lastly, they feel the church needs to become stronger and bolder in new ways of evangelization and the proclamation of the gospel in years to come." Another student reacted to the use of the term *conservative*. He noted, "I don't think of myself as conservative but rather as orthodox. To me, conservative is a political term, or it has the connotation of being a step behind or old-fashioned, and I am neither."

The Xers' theological understanding of the church includes a strong sense of their mission to be transformative agents within the church. This transformative mission mandates that Xers be more highly visible within the church and within society at large. In discussing how to approach a conversation between themselves and the culture they wish to transform, half the students in the focus group once more raised the issue of priestly garb and the need for priests and religious to be more visible. One student commented, "that is why we are called to be a part of something that is visible, not invisible. The most unhappy priests I know are the ones who no longer appreciate the essence of their religious calling." Another student said, "It's not cool or normal to wear a cross or to attempt a commitment to celibate living, but we do so because we believe that we can better serve our brothers and sisters by showing a different way of life." One student took a rather strong opposing view. He spoke of the generational task as the transformation of the suspicious attitude of Generation X toward the church and things sacred. In his opinion, "Habits and the like only reinforce the lack of personal identity in the generation."

> **The religious education system that Generation Xers went through did not provide them with an adequate religious foundation for building an adult faith life or engaging in theological studies on a graduate level**

FINDING THE SACRED

In the formational task it is important to know how and where one encounters a sense of the sacred. The place of encounter is important because it becomes the starting point for formation on various levels. Within the information gleaned from the focus group, a few common themes surfaced. Over half the respondents indicated that they encounter a sense of the sacred during their participation in the Eucharist and common prayer within the seminary or formational community. The second most common response from half the respondents demonstrated that the arts are a source of their encounter with the sacred. They cited various examples of classical and contemporary art, architecture, and music that provide a window into the realm of the sacred for them. The remainder of the responses were dispersed over various areas. One student noted that he encounters the experience of the "suffering of Christ" within his ministerial encounters with "the poor, the suffering, the dying, the lonely, the despairing, and the hopeless." Another student said that he encounters a sense of the sacred in the arena of human relationships and pushing the limits of his own sense of self. As he expressed it, "I experience the sacred most often in the following ways: being with my friends; while pushing myself during exercise, study, and intensive activity. . . ." One student, near the end of the conversation, observed that no one in the focus group encountered a sense of the sacred within the technology of the day. As a group, Xers tend to look outside the technology of their generation to encounter a sense of the sacred. The participants thought this was a good observation that was worth more consideration.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

It is important to note that I did not intend for the focus group to provide a definitive explanation of GenX seminarians within formation. My hope was simply to provide a nonthreatening environment in which students could reflect on and give voice to certain aspects of their participation in their seminary and religious formation process, as well as their generational context. The following analysis of the data is not intended to be a generalization about Generation X; it is simply an analysis of a conversation I had with six members of that generation who are currently engaged in priestly formation. I believe it is important to engage students in a discussion about their involvement and participation in the formation process.

Great Passion. I was struck by the deep passion and conviction with which the six men addressed the various topics discussed. Overall, they take their formational and educational responsibilities seriously. They wholeheartedly enter into their study of the church and their pastoral work. They have a strong desire to know what the church teaches on a given topic. This desire grows out of their own personal and generational history. The religious education system that these students went through did not provide them with an adequate religious foundation for building an adult faith life or engaging in theological studies on a graduate level. Richard Marzheuser, writing on the various images of the church (*America*, 12/2/95), used the seminary formational community as a microcosm of the church. He noted three schema within the historical development of seminary formation: the classical theological formation (seminary education before 1965), the newer theological formation (for those born before 1960, whose training was completed after 1970), and the newer generation (for those born after 1960, whose entire religious education and experience came after Vatican II). Generation X is represented by Marzheuser's third category, and I found his work to be most helpful in formulating the content for the focus group discussion. As one

participant said, "We are a generation that was raised on rainbows and butterflies for our religious education." This lack of adequate religious formation fires the passion within them to know what the church teaches. It is well to keep this in mind. When they ask "What does the church teach on this or that?" it may well be that they are searching for a simple answer to their question, not the blueprint for salvation or the recipe for orthodox behavior.

Heightened Suspicion. Like other members of Generation X, the seminarians in the focus group expressed a heightened suspicion of the previous (Baby Boomer) generation. GenX seminarians tend to be more comfortable with older clergy. The issues and concerns that priests from the classical generation struggled with and still struggle with are very similar to those faced by GenX seminary students. A mentoring relationship between members of the two generations can have either a positive or negative impact on the seminarian's formation process, depending on the healthy or unhealthy adjustment made by the senior priest. The heightened suspicion of the GenX seminarian is often most visible when he deals with the formation team, whose members are from the Baby Boomer generation.

Lack of Religious Imagination. As noted earlier, more and more seminary students are coming to schools of theology and seminaries from various academic disciplines. Often students from less traditional disciplines lack the skills required to think theologically. Gone are the days when each and every theology student had a solid philosophical background. The classical education of the past enabled the seminarian to enter into the abstract world of the religious imagination. The focus group, when addressing the concept of priestly identity, often returned to the visual identity of the ordained and his function within the community—concrete topics requiring little abstract thought. In the same fashion, half the participants noted their sense of the sacred within community prayer and worship—concrete physical expressions of one's faith life. Only one seminary student in the focus group sought to move the discussion into the deeper reality of the abstract and engage the religious imagination.

The Technological Generation. Students of Generation X are the first to make full use of the advances of modern technology within their educational development. Nevertheless, when the focus group students addressed their formational process and spiritual life, they did not cite the influence of technology as a major issue. Students in formation looked largely to the previous generations to discover a sense of the sacred or to enrich their spiritual life. Overall, technological advances have apparently had little impact on the formation process.

NEW PARADIGM EMERGING

Entering into this conversation with members of Generation X who are currently in seminary formation made me aware of the vast generational differences between the Baby Boomers entrusted with the responsibility of seminary formation and the Xers engaged in seminary formation. I believe that the GenX seminarians of the focus group are not simply attempting to recreate the past; they are constructing a truly new paradigm. The challenge to seminary and formators alike is to openly and honestly enter into conversation about this emerging paradigm with Xers, for the betterment of the formational enterprise and for the future ministry of the church.

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Specialized Training for Religious Formators

Joel Giallanza, C.S.C.

Because sensitive tasks are involved, the training of suitable directors of formation, who will fulfill their task in a spirit of communion with the whole church, is very important. It will be helpful to establish appropriate structures for the training of those responsible for formation. (Vita Consecrata, 66).

Even though the church has consistently given primary importance to the ministry of formation, it is not uncommon to hear formators comment on their lack of personal and professional preparation for that ministry. Even those who were informed well in advance of their appointment often note that whatever preparation they had was self-initiated, minimal, or altogether unfeasible given their ministerial commitment prior to moving into the formation setting. For many, the appointment to formation ministry came as a surprise—one often compounded by the short span of time between appointment to and involvement in the ministry. On-the-job training was the primary means of learning about the ministry and means of contemporary formation, simply because there was no time for alternatives. While some formators are able to participate in conferences and workshops designed to assist them in ministry, others do not have such opportunities because the schedule of the program they direct does not allow sufficient spans of time between the completion of one segment and the beginning of the next, or the departure of one formation group and the arrival of another.

Even those who do participate in conferences and workshops emphasize the need for additional input to become more familiar with their own institute's current and evolving perspectives and directives concerning formation. It cannot be assumed that new formators are thoroughly versed in the heritage and traditions of their institute or know how approaches to formation have evolved since they entered the institute. I believe that some intercongregational and intracongregational training for formators should be provided prior to the beginning of their actual involvement in the ministry.

The "appropriate structures" referred to in *Vita Consecrata* could include training programs for formators designed by each religious institute to supplement what is offered by more extensive multicongregational programs. This article will focus on some elements that could be included in such a supplemental, intracongregational program.

GENERATIONS X, Y, AND BEYOND

Multicongregational training programs for formators usually focus on some general aspects of the qualities and values that characterize Generations

X and Y. That information is valuable in helping formators to identify the expectations and aspirations of those entering religious life from the present generation, and it can even offer perspectives on the emerging profiles of generations to come. Because formators usually belong to a generation other than the one represented by those in formation, insights into the present generation can help them make appropriate discernments and just decisions. What may not look like growth to a formator belonging to the Baby Boomer generation or an earlier one may in fact be growth for someone in formation who belongs to Generation X or Y. Similarly, such information becomes important to the members of the larger community, with whom those in formation will eventually live.

It would be beneficial for religious institutes to expand this general information with a supplement that focuses on the profile of the specific cultures and subcultures from which they are presently receiving vocations, even within the same country. This supplemental component is especially useful for international religious institutes. As individuals from various cultures, societies, and worldviews begin to meet and even live with one another in a formation setting, it is essential that formators be sensitive to attitudes, behaviors, and traditions that reflect the richness of those cultures. This sensitivity can be of genuine pastoral assistance in avoiding division and alienation when confusion or misunderstanding arises from unfamiliarity with a given culture.

WIDE SPECTRUM OF ENTRANTS

A particular challenge that formators confront involves entrants who are outside the usual admission parameters set by the institute. This can include entrants who are older than most admitted in recent years, or whose academic abilities or life experiences are significantly different, or whose physical conditions warrant special attention. These and other factors challenge formators to be familiar with such individuals' profiles and to be creative in proposing possible programs for them. Entrants' varied patterns of relating, areas of interest, and approaches to prayer and community life may cover a wide spectrum, especially in formation programs whose members represent a significant diversity of any type. Such programs must be adaptable enough to nurture an environment in which entrants can offer and receive support and encouragement from one another without creating divisions within the community based on age, academics, life experiences, or physical conditions.

Institutes that are open to a wide spectrum of applicants need not necessarily narrow their admission criteria; rather, it will be important for them to examine whether or not their current prenovitiate, novitiate, and postnovitiate programs are designed to support a diversity of entrants. Appropriate modifications should be implemented on the basis of the findings of that examination. This is not merely a means of assuring that the design of the formation program is integrated and effective, though that is significant. It is also a matter of justice to those whom the institute invites to enter as prospective members. It is unjust to invite those whose age, academic abilities, life experiences, or physical conditions might require some adjustment in the program but to place them in settings that are not sufficiently adaptable. The program must be able to accommodate those who are accepted into it even while challenging them to continued growth.

SPIRITUALITY AND HERITAGE

In recent years, religious institutes have explored anew their own spirituality and heritage. This exploration resulted, at least in part, from the work involved in preparing revised constitutional texts. Also, communities have continued to emphasize the contemporary significance and relevance of their founders, which is particularly important for religious institutes that have not historically been consistent in articulating and transmitting the value and influence of their founding persons. Formators need to be fluent in the spirituality and heritage of their institutes to ensure that the formation program is not merely a generic presentation of the Christian life or even a general formulation of the religious life.

This fluency involves more than communicating information about the spirituality and heritage of the institute. Formators must also be able to apply that information to the process of determining the spiritual growth and development of those in formation; in other words, it must be practical enough for discernment and evaluative purposes. For religious life today, personal spiritual growth and development must reflect the basic principles and practices of Christian spirituality as well as the values and characteristics that mark a person as a member of a particular religious institute. Today, religious often speak of their "invisibility" within the church; nurturing a working knowledge of the institute's spirituality and heritage among the members can be a significant means of dissipating some of that invisibility.

PRACTICAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Appointment to formation ministry does not automatically include complete familiarity with the constitutional and regulatory perspectives, practices, and procedures that guide the formation programs of the institute. Given the modifications that general chapters can and do initiate and implement, it is unlikely that formators will have entered their institute under exactly the same constitutions and rules as those currently being used. In addition, their own ministerial and continuing formation history may not have included or provided opportunities for an ongoing familiarity with those modifications. Any training program designed by a single institute for its members who are preparing for or already working in formation ministry should include a complete study of the constitutions and other significant texts related to the institute's principles, policies, and procedures regarding formation.

Familiarity with this material must be more than an expansion of the formators' general knowledge about the institute. It must ensure that formators are able to assist those in formation to understand the practical and regulatory aspects of living the vows, particularly the stipulations related to poverty; of responsibly participating in the life of the institute through chapters and election processes; of knowing the protocols related to the vow of obedience; and of exercising their right to active and passive voice as applicable and when appropriate. Also, formators can assist those in formation to become familiar with and understand the nature and necessity of specific legal documents, such as the *Cession of Administration, Statement on Remuneration,* and *Last Will and Testament.* Admittedly, these are hardly the most exciting and engaging aspects of formation ministry; nevertheless, they are aspects with which formators must be familiar because questions and the need for clarifications inevitably arise, even from the relatives of those in formation.

EVALUATIONS: CONTENT AND PROCESS

Formators from many institutes could probably identify and agree on some basic elements to be included as part of the evaluative process for those in formation. The field of those in agreement might shrink a bit when the focus turns to the specific methods to be used in designing evaluative periods—for example, oral or written evaluations, use of peer evaluations, or inclusion of input from people outside the program, such as ministry supervisors. Further shrinkage would be evident as the focus becomes the

expectations and assumptions surrounding the determination of growth and development in members of the institute. Each institute must be able to articulate the basic marks of growth and development toward holiness for all its members, especially for those in formation.

For the sake of consistency, it is important that formators within the same institute share very similar perspectives regarding the content and process to be used for evaluations within formation programs. For the sake of continuity, it is important that formators on the different levels of formation have a sense of the progress that is to take place as a person moves from prenovitiate to novitiate to postnovitiate. The design of the evaluative instruments used should reflect that sense of progress. The alternative would be confusion among those in the formation program, since formators would be reformulating the principles and parameters to be used for each evaluative period. Such an alternative is unfair both to those in formation and, ultimately, to the other community members with whom they will eventually live and work. It is unfair precisely because it does not provide for a common viewpoint from which to understand and recognize continuing growth and development.

INTANGIBLES IN FORMATION

Even though we can speak of the structures and procedures that shape contemporary formtion, there are many intangibles within this ministry. Unless they are recognized and understood, those intangibles can create unnecessary stress and frustration as formators try to interpret what is unfolding within the program and among the members of the formation community. Such intangibles include the affective reality of relationships within the formation community, among those in formation, and between them and the formators; the reactions of those in formation and of formators during evaluative periods; the design of a realistic support system for formators to ensure a sufficient level of objectivity for the effectiveness of their ministry to those in formation; the role of intuition and feelings in gauging what is happening within those in formation and within oneself as a formator; and means for maintaining balance and perspective during times of tension and stress. Although some of these intangibles have concrete implications, they can emerge and develop gradually and imperceptibly. It is important to recognize and understand these and other intangible aspects of formation ministry, as they constitute at least

part of the "sensitive tasks" to which *Vita Consecrata* refers.

Those who have served in contemporary formation ministry for several years can be a valuable resource for those who are preparing to begin this ministry and for those who are new to it. Experienced formators will be able to assist with the identification of intangibles that may be unique to the institute or to a particular sector of it. They can also serve as a support network, providing those new to formation ministry with insights and suggestions on how to interpret and address various situations. It is important for those who are just beginning formation ministry to realize that there is no need to start from scratch and that they are not alone, though that may be their initial feeling because they are not completely familiar with the work involved. They can call on others with expertise and experience in this ministry to test principles and perspectives and to formulate their own procedures and processes.

PERSONAL DIMENSIONS OF FORMATOR

I have yet to be in a gathering of formators, whether from my own congregation or another, in which some form of this question does not emerge: "How did you get into formation work?" It is not unusual for formators to share their sense of being unprepared for this ministry prior to and during their initial involvement in it. There are many "trial by fire" stories among contemporary formators. Because formators do not always have the time to process their initial reactions prior to beginning the ministry, a supplemental program could include a segment for sharing personal fears, concerns, hopes, and wonderments about being in the ministry of formation, as well as for discussing adequacies and inadequacies, strengths and weaknesses.

These personal dimensions emerge precisely because formation is a sacred ministry. It places the formator in the personal life and spiritual journey and vocational discernment of other individuals who believe they have been called by God to this way of life in a specific religious institute. That is holy ground. Often, formators reflect on, pray about, and share with one another their perceptions concerning what they sense is happening within an individual and wonder how God is at work through what they see and experience. They may tend to question or even dismiss those perceptions, especially when what they see and experience indicates that the person may not have a religious vocation. It is important, then, that formators become comfortable with the variability of these personal dimen-

sions and recognize that this does not necessarily indicate any lack of competence to be in the ministry of formation.

COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT

Not every institute will have the resources necessary to develop its own supplemental training program for formators. *Vita Consecrata* encourages intercongregational collaboration: "In the work of formation, the more solidly established Institutes should help those of more recent foundation by contributing some of their best members." There are variations that can be extracted from this basic call for collaboration. Even some "more solidly established Institutes" may at times require the assistance and expertise of experienced formators from other institutes in training their formators. Also, sectors within the same institute can be quite uneven in terms of formation resources; thus, mechanisms for sharing of formation personnel among those sectors may need to be developed if not already in place. If such sharing is not feasible, an alternative is to implement some type of regular communication among formators.

Such collaboration, while respecting the importance of intracongregational training of formators, highlights that the ministry of formation takes place "in a spirit of communion with the whole church." Religious institutes are called to share the richness of their experience and expertise with one another without losing sight of the importance of further exploring and communicating their own heritage and tradition to those directly responsible for programs of formation. In fact, they will have more to share with one another to the degree that they have clarified and articulated their unique heritage and tradition. This dialogue among religious institutes thus becomes fertile soil for creativity, not only for the ministry of formation but also for the future of religious life itself.

SHARING IN GOD'S WORK

To quote again from *Vita Consecrata*, "Formation . . . is a sharing in the work of the Father who, through the Spirit, fashions the inner attitudes of the Son in the hearts of young men and women." Formation has and will continue to be a sacred ministry within the church. Many are the tasks that mark this ministry. Formators need to be present and to accompany those in formation in a variety of ways, "but above all they will disclose the beauty of following Christ and the value of the charism by which this is accomplished." It is for this task of

fashioning hearts to follow Christ and to value the institute's charism that formators must be trained. It is a sacred task for the formator, a privileged responsibility of the institute, and a graced work of the Lord. The quality of this fashioning will have a large share in determining the quality of religious life in the years ahead.

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Cultures of Bullying

Gerald A. Arbuckle, S.M., Ph.D.

On the road I have to travel they have hidden a trap for me. . . . Rescue me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me. Lead me out of prison that I may praise your name (Ps. 142:3, 6).

Bullying is not something confined to schoolchildren. It is a widespread form of abuse to be found in all forms of employment, cultures, religious congregations, and the church itself. In fact, bullying is behind every type of discrimination, persecution, conflict, violence, prejudice, and harassment. It is extremely costly in human and financial terms. It is estimated that in Western societies, one-third to one-half of all stress-related illnesses are due to bullying. In the United States, businesses are losing an annual five to six billion dollars in decreased productivity alone, due to real or perceived abuse of employees. In Australia, bullying by employers or workmates forces about 70 percent of employees to take time off. I believe that bullying, because of its pervasive nature, is the most important contemporary social issue.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is three-fold: to explain the nature of bullying and its impact on the victims, to explain its cultural roots, and to suggest ways to counter its insidious forces.

DEFINING BULLYING

Bullying is persistent, unwelcome action or verbal, psychological, or physical aggression that is knowingly or unknowingly directed by an individual or group against people who normally are not in a position to defend themselves. It is irrational behavior, evoking strong emotions in both bully and victim.

In brief, bullies wish to force people to do what they want them to do and will try all kinds of intimidation to achieve this. The victim feels helpless, especially when, as is commonly the case, the bully has seniority over the victim. The behavior of bullies takes many forms, including the use of abusive language, public or private humiliation, taking credit for the achievements of others, refusing to take blame for failures, persistent nitpicking, constantly being critical and sarcastic with others, withholding information to maintain power over people, expecting unreasonable results from others, flattering superiors and gossiping to them about other employees, having difficulties delegating authority, and being destructive of teamwork.

The following case study, as described by one of the victims, illustrates what happens when bullying by a CEO in a hospital culture goes unchecked: bullying becomes a way of life, infecting the whole system. The hospital was a Catholic institution with a mission statement that proclaimed that employees would be

treated with the respect due them "as sons and daughters of a loving God" and that leadership would be exercised in "a servant/collaborative style."

The hospital CEO, on assuming his position, said that his door was always open to people with complaints or good ideas. But he listened only to certain individuals and downgraded the normal structures of delegation and consultation. Gossip flourished because he would tell one person (usually a favorite) something about policy but never communicate it to the system.

He developed a patronage precedure: if you were subservient to him and flattered him, then there was a chance you could get what you wanted. If he did not like you, then you lived in fear lest suddenly you would be told to leave or ignored for promotion. There developed a demoralizing atmosphere in which no one could trust anyone in the system. Board members and trustees recognized that some bullying was taking place, but they hesitated to intervene because, they said, the CEO was financially improving the hospital's reserves. Employees who did complain to them were branded "dangerous agitators" or "disloyal managers" and were eventually dismissed.

This case study highlights two critical points: the misuse of power by the bullying CEO and the evil of collusion in the terrorization by board members and trustees. Power, which is a person's potential to influence others, can originate from one's official position in a group or from one's personal gifts. The CEO had position power; that is, he had the authority to direct people's actions after due consultation. But he did not do this; instead, he used his position to terrorize people into submission. People complied for fear of losing their jobs.

The CEO also had personal gifts of persuasion and financial expertise, which he used effectively in relating to board members and trustees. They felt flattered by his praise of them or intimidated by the superior knowledge that he claimed. Those who were suspicious of his methods, however, thought that by appeasing him he would cease to bully other employees. Yet by not challenging the bully, these board members and trustees colluded in his abusive behavior; they became bullies themselves by giving permission to the CEO to continue to act unjustly. Pilate colluded with the bullying crowd that cried for the death of Jesus, but he sought to dissociate himself by ritually washing his hands in public (Matt. 27:24).

The improvement of the hospital's finances was not sustained, because creative people who had been victimized left, and the surviving managers dared not question the mistakes of the CEO. Even-

tually, the CEO was asked to resign. This case illustrates the truth of the axiom, "the good leader leads; the poor leader bullies."

QUALITIES OF BULLIES

Bullies are inadequate people, fearful of losing face, overly sensitive to criticism, deeply lonely within themselves. They evade dealing with their deficiencies and divert people's attention from them by bullying the less powerful. They project onto their victims their own deficiences, denying all the while that the real problems are within themselves. Bullies are often skilled at hiding their actions from others. Sometimes they flatter people who might challenge them, especially if those people are perceived to have more power (as evidenced in the above case study) or make them unduly dependent through gifts or acts of assumed generosity.

The following case study, in which an innovator is "amputated," details stages that bullying can take. The description comes from a former manager of the orthopaedic department of a nonprofit hospital who was forced out of his job through intimidation by an aggressor supported by other members of his staff.

I had researched for several months into how best our department could extend its services into a poor area of the city. The report was sent to other members of the executive, but the moment I formally presented it to the group, I felt a coldness and an impatience. Without my knowledge, the CEO and other executives had devised an alternative plan.

The CEO said, "Your plan is good, but it is not as good as ours." He and others tried to argue with me about the value of their plan [the "rational" stage]. But it became obvious that the group had not studied the plan before the meeting. After the CEO called for a coffee break, several executives came to me and said, "Look, you are a good friend [the "emotional seduction" stage]. Why can't you see our way, as you have always done?" I stood my ground, asking that my plan be seriously considered, but this evoked abusive responses: "You are stubborn! It is impossible to work with you!" [the "formal bullying" stage]. Back at the conference table, the meeting resumed, and I felt very strange; it was as though I no longer existed. No eyes turned to me. No questions were addressed to me on other matters [the "amputation" or marginalization stage]. After I left the job, the CEO's plan failed because his subordinates feared to challenge its weaknesses and receive the same treatment I had.

BULLYING IS ABOUT CONTROL

The next case study is about a religious who initiated, and now directs, a much-appreciated ministry to the poor. It started with the full support of the then province leader. Structures were set in place with the blessing of the local bishop to allow the religious (who is the director) and her team to give their energies fully to the project. The director faithfully kept the leader informed of the project through detailed annual reports. The new province leader, however, wanted to change the structures to gain personal control of the venture. This is a verbatim account of what happened.

When the new leader assumed office, she began frequently to write to me about trivial issues, requesting an immediate response on my part. She would choose the most inappropriate times to do this—for example, prior to beginning my holidays or on the eve of presenting major reports to the diocese and local government. I began to feel as though I were under a waterfall and could not escape. I felt I was being constantly haunted by the leader; my sleep was affected, my energy for work declined. No sooner had I replied to one letter explaining a point than another would come, demanding more information and directives. For a while she used to phone to pressure me with questions, but I eventually was able to stop this.

In my annual reports I would explain not only what was happening in the project in the service of the poor, but also the theology upon which it was based. The provincial leader, however, would bypass the substance of the reports and question me about irrelevant details. Then I discovered that she had gone to the bishop in an effort to bring the project directly under her control. The bishop, after consultation with me and my colleagues, refused. At the times when I did speak with her, I would find myself becoming angry and weary because she would never allow me to discuss with her the theology of the project and how the project was responding to real needs of human deprivation. She would become obstinate and dogmatic about little things the more I invited her to look at the bigger issues affecting the project. It became a hopeless situation. She kept saying I should improve my "public relations" with herself and the province, yet the more I tried, the more she would seek to interfere.

I tried to communicate my worries to a member of her team, but I was rebuffed because the leader instructed the councilor that this would divide the team. She said that a councilor's role was to support the leader. When I protested, I was again told that I was not loyal to the province and would not listen to sound advice. From then on, I have felt like a nonperson in the province. No one is concerned about what

has been happening to me. The affirmation the project receives from the bishop and the poor seems to make no impression on the leader and her followers. Some members of the province have submitted themselves and their ministries to the leader's control for the sake of peace, but they feel angry because of their dependence on her.

Paradoxically, my marginalization has been a benefit to me. My energy for ministry is no longer being drained away on irrelevancies.

This case highlights certain qualities of bullies. They are consumed with the desire to control anything that may affect people's lives. They view relationships in terms of dominance and submission: they demand that others conform to their ways of acting. There is a lack of spontaneity and ability to relax; they may present themselves as hardworking, but their behavior is rigid and repetitive. They lack imagination and are prone to overreaction and exaggerated gestures of generosity to sycophants prepared to submit to their views. Those who do not do so become targets of revenge. The victim, as in the previous case study, is marginalized from the province—an extremely painful experience for someone who has given her life to the mission of the province. In this incident, the province leader refuses to empower the director because to do so would be to lessen her control over the victim.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VICTIMS

Bullies have an uncanny ability to sense the vulnerabilities of others and to capitalize on their

weaknesses. A bully methodically undermines the self-confidence and self-esteem of others. The victims experience fear, self-doubt, impotence, rage, depression, sleep and eating disorders, poor concentration, chest pain, and shock that they are the object of attack. They may even feel guilty, believing that they are responsible for what is happening. If the bullied attempt to defend themselves, the bully will react with futher abuse; victims who complain are commonly branded as troublemakers. The last thing a bully wants is to be found out and to have his or her behavior revealed by a whistleblower; thus, the more attention directed to the victim's supposed failings, the better. Often, the victim becomes ostracized by others who fear that they themselves will become victims. They then collude in the terrorization.

Commonly, the victim who challenges the bully is forced to leave his or her job, often with broken health. It becomes difficult for the individual to obtain another job, either because of broken health or because the bully spreads the word that the victim is not to be trusted.

CULTURAL ROOTS OF BULLYING

Most studies of bullying focus on the psychological inadequacies of the perpetrator and the effects on the victim. The above analysis summarizes this material. However, bullying occurs within a cultural context, and insights into its dynamics can be further understood if this environment is explained. For example, certain cultural variables evoke individual or group bullying of different types or levels of intensity.

In organizational theory, the concept of culture has passed through various stages since it became popular in the early 1980s. The first stage of enthusiasm was followed by disillusionment because the traditional definition of culture that was used did not fit the reality that people were experiencing. This definition views culture as a visible, comprehensible entity—the conscious creation of rational minds. It stresses the need to detail observable phenomena—for example, what a bully was seen to do and the visible reactions of the victim—and to ignore the inner cultural irrationality that contributes to the bullying.

This definition has grave deficiencies because it likens a culture to a machine—something with visible, rationally constructed, and interconnecting parts. In this view, each part, such as a custom or institution, can be readily replaced by another component without people experiencing any sense of hurt or difficulty. According to this theory, if a bully

changes his or her behavior without undergoing radical interior conversion, then harassment will stop. In reality, however, this is not so. The irrational drive to dominate others cannot be controlled without this inner change within the perpetrator and the supporting culture.

The second definition of culture gives priority to a group's ideas and feelings, together with a culture's inner irrational dynamics: culture is a pattern of shared meanings and values embodied in a network of symbols, myths, and rituals, created by a particular group as it struggles to adjust to life's challenges, educating its members about what is considered to be the orderly and correct way to feel, think and behave. Significantly, culture shapes people's emotional reaction to the world of people and things. The word *emotional* is important; a culture penetrates the deepest recesses of the human group and individuals, in particular their feelings. Hence, it is more accurate to define culture not as "what people do" but rather as "what people feel, whether consciously or unknowingly, about what they do."

The primary function of culture is to provide people with a felt sense of order and predictability. Hence, people most fear chaos, which is the radical breakdown of felt order or meaning. Any person or group, therefore, that "strays seriously from the socially defined programs can be considered not only a fool or a knave but a madman," as Peter Berger has written. Thus, a twofold dynamic is operative at the deepest levels of the group and individual unconscious: to mold people to be submissive to a culturally determined order and to punish those who refuse to submit to this predictability.

Therefore, it is not sufficient to focus only on the personal inadequacies of a bully as the underlying cause of his or her behavior. Rather, in addition, it is necessary to be sensitive to the cultural context in which the victimization occurs, with all its hidden irrational forces. As a general rule, it must be assumed that culture, as defined in the second sense, is a hidden force that legitimizes, most often unconsciously, all forms of bullying. In other words, cultures need to have bullies to maintain their need for felt order. Unless this cultural reality is addressed, and not just the deficiencies of the bully, intimidation of the powerless will continue.

CULTURE MODELS AND BULLYING

An anthropological model is not a perfect representation of the real world at all but a highlighting of major emphases to be found in cultures. Nuanced explanations or details are omitted to allow us to grasp a little more clearly what is in reality a highly

complex situation. Any particular culture is then compared with the model to see to what extent it resembles it or not. In practice, any culture will tend to approximate one culture model while having elements of the other models to a much lesser degree.

Model 1: "Traditional" Culture. Group boundaries are rigidly delineated, and internal structures set out in minute detail how people are to relate to one another within a male-dominated hierarchical system. Conformity to unchanging tradition is the most esteemed value. Change takes place extremely slowly, if at all. Intense loyalty to the group and its rules is expected, and rituals that celebrate and reinforce identity and conformity are of fundamental importance (e.g., hazing rituals of initiation into sections of the army). Individual identity or questioning of the status quo is not permitted; people must obtain their identity from the group, and they must not think for themselves. There are built-in mechanisms that would force an innovator out of the group. Such a person is seen as a threat to the status quo, a traitor to sacred traditions. The culture itself is a bullying force, and it legitimizes the actions of certain people (e.g., police officers, military personnel, teachers, administrators) to coerce those who threaten the status quo.

In this culture type, people fear ostracization by the group because this would destroy their identity or sense of belonging. In Japan, where traditional culture still predominates, there is the custom of *murahachibu* (social ostracism), and it is particularly operative in the workplace in today's economic crisis. When surplus labor is to be shed, a company's personnel department may encourage workers to ostracize those targetted for dismissal. A middle manager, for example, who has worked for his company for years fails to receive his cup of green tea from the office lady; a week later he is not invited to the regular morning meeting. Then the phone is disconnected, followed by the computer. Finally, the desk is removed.

The church's culture, particularly prior to Vatican II, reflected this model of culture. In the Western world the medical profession also commonly operates according to this model, excluding people (e.g., women, practitioners of alternative medicine) who do not fit the requirements of tradition.

Model 2: The Win/Lose Culture. In this culture type, people are sturdily individualistic, utilitarian, and competitive, but they have a weak sense of belonging or having obligations to the group. Everything is competitive in this culture. There is no compromise; the winner gets all and the loser re-

ceives nothing. If people think other relationships can further their interests, they readily break the ties they have to their present group. The gender emphasis is masculine, because the qualities thought to be required for success are aggressiveness, rationality, and individualism. Bullying can be an esteemed sign of courage and manliness. Capitalism exemplifies this culture type; it applauds forms of violence as means to an end. America, writes Rollo May, is among the most violent of the civilized nations because the ethos of frontier brutality still haunts every institution: what I cannot get through influence, I will bully for.

Jealousy and envy are powerfully operative in this culture model, motivating people to become bullies. Jealousy is the fear of losing what one already possesses. Envy is a feeling of sadness or resentment aroused by the desire to have what another possesses. Because jealousy and envy are emotions that are essentially both selfish and malevolent, they have destructive results. Bullies will destroy what they cannot get or hold onto; for example, Hitler, in the closing months of the World War II, ordered the dzestruction of cities before surrendering them. This is also dramatically illustrated biblically with incidents such as the killing of Abel by Cain, the abandonment of Joseph by his brothers, and the chief priests' handing of Jesus over to Pilate "out of envy" (Mark 15:10) to be crucified.

Model 3: "Culture Breakdown" Bullying. The novel *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding, describes the dynamics of this culture model. On the author's fictional island, a group of boys, freed from the restraints of a traditional English culture, engage in the most vicious forms of bullying, with individuals colluding to avoid being victims themselves. The author shows how bullying is an evil dormant in human nature and how the world may appear a bright place when in fact the corruption of violence can suddenly erupt from within people and darken it.

In this type of culture, people have a sense of belonging to one group rather than to another, but there is a marked lack of agreement about the ways in which individuals relate to one another within that group. In other words, internal social cohesion is weak, and social conflict is considerable. Cliques, alliances, and sects form in response to people's needs for security and control in a world of uncertainty and change. People are suspicious of one another, feeling that others are manipulating the system against them, which destroys all sense of order and security. It is a climate in which bullying against people or subgroups who dare to be differ-

ent flourishes. It frequently takes the form of witch hunting or scapegoating (which is addressed later in this article). People want reasons for their loss of security, and scapegoating provides a ready-made response.

Therefore, unlike the first model, the maintenance of tradition is not the primary legitimation for bullying, because there is no consensus left about its importance. Rather, legitimation comes from people's desire to protect or enhance their power base in an unstable world.

Model 4: Culture of Servanthood. Healthy groups have a clarity of task or mission, open discussions, an environment that fosters creativity for the mission. No one individual or group holds coercive power over others, and leadership calls the groups to be accountable to the mission. Such groups adhere to a culture of servanthood, built on a two-way process that is to be ongoing: the servant-leader expects to receive honest feedback as well as to offer it to those served. This evokes trust, and people grow and become creative in such an atmosphere. It is a culture in which the power to influence rather than the power to control is the expected way of life. That is, leadership is to be exercised in a collaborative, not a patriarchal, manner. A feminine aspect is evident in a heightened awareness of creativity, sensitivity, personal relationships and feelings, personal worth, and individual differences.

Jesus taught this by word and example: " 'You know that among the Gentiles those they call rulers lord it over them, and their great men have their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen' " (Mark 11:42–43). For Christ, bullying is an evil—an insult to God's creation and to God's love for each person. Hence, leadership is to be exercised in a collaborative, not a patriarchal or bullying, manner. During the last supper, Jesus reiterated that authority and power must be at the service of building community in which people can develop their talents for others. This style of leadership is possible, Jesus insisted, only if there is an inner conversion to this way of leading. Only then is one prepared to give up undue control, to listen to others, and to be changed by them as well as to lead them.

UNDERSTANDING SCAPEGOATING

Witch hunting is the process of passionately searching for and eliminating evil agents believed to be causing harm to individuals or groups, and as a craze it rises and fades in reaction to chaos and its eventual control. The greater or more intense the social upheaval and consequent fear of the un-known, the more frequent and persistent is the witch hunting.

For example, as the use of money became more general in the Middle Ages, so the involuntary poor became starkly socially defined by the lack of money. The presence of the poor caused the rich to fear that they would lose their own wealth through the revengeful machinations of the impoverished, so the poor were identified and isolated, lest they pollute with their presence the emerging wealthy class. Thus there developed in the late Middle Ages considerable animosity toward the poor, resulting in oppressive legislation against them.

The McCarthy anticommunist movement in the United States had much of the emotion, fear, prejudice, and injustices of witch hunts of previous centuries. The cultural and political climate within the United States provided the right preconditions for McCarthyism to emerge: after the Second World War, as Eastern Europe succumbed to oppressive dictatorships, many Americans wondered about their own country's future as a free nation. McCarthy pointed to scapegoats—unnamed Communists in high places of government—as the causes of the breakdown of security and people's fears of the unknown.

When people witch-hunt for the causes of their anxiety and misfortunes, they are able conveniently to relieve themselves of any guilt for what is happening. They lay the blame simplistically on others, believing that if only such deviants can be found and punished, their tribulations will disappear. In transferring the guilt to others, bullies and their supporters project onto the victims all the internal evil they cannot face themselves (e.g., envy, manipulation of power, patronage). The true witches or villains are within, but few want to look in that direction because it would demand painful internal conversion and restructuring of their operations.

No human group in culture breakdown is exempt from the scapegoating dynamic. It is alive in religious congregations that refuse to allow members to question the causes of their chaos, preferring to blame certain members of their communties simply because those individuals are prepared to be pastorally creative and therefore different. So often the real problems are complex, and if honest questions were asked it would mean a lot of hard work, radical gospel conversion, living in ambiguity, and lifestyle changes.

Healthcare services in Western countries are so burdened by spiraling costs, inexorably increased by the healthcare demands of an aging popultion and expensive technology and drugs, that their economies risk breaking under the strain. People

want a simple answer, however, for the cause of this contemporary chaos. Economic rationalism provides the scapegoat. The poor, unemployed, disabled, or marginalized are unhealthy through their own fault; it is a "social sin," and it is harmful to the rich and industrious to keep supporting them. Therefore cutbacks are made in welfare, unemployment benefits, Medicare, and Medicaid.

This following case study shows how consultants can be the objects of bullying.

A consultant had been employed by a congregational leadership group for two years. When the consultant was about to facilitate the group's discovery of its own inner weaknesses, the group became uneasy about what lay ahead and cancelled the contract. Members had been complaining to each other: "The consultant really does not understand us. We want to get on with the work of evangelization, but she says there are obstacles within that are stopping us from becoming a team. We are already a very effective team. The consultant is causing us unnecessary work."

Consultants are easy targets for ostracization; they stand outside the group, and their task is to lead the group to self-discovery, but the more the group is challenged with this task, the more unconsciously it will resist the pain of self-knowledge. A scapegoat must be found for this pain, and the consultant, as the outsider, is the logical choice. It is my experience that groups in chaos, which are therefore prone to denial and avoidance of problems, have a high turnover of consultants. The moment that hard truths are to be faced, the scapegoating begins. It takes courage for a group to confront its dark side.

WITCH AND WITCH HUNTER

The characteristics of witches and scapegoats—that is, the people or groups believed to be causing the loss of security—have commonly been the same throughout history: they are people on the margins of society—known nonconformers to the status quo, creative people who challenge traditional ways of thinking or doing things, those who have no access to power structures (e.g., women, the poor). In the entire history of witch crazes, at least three women were accused for every one man accused. In the patriarchical society of Europe, women had little legal or political power or redress and were thus highly vulnerable to witchcraft accusations. Not too much has changed in contemporary societies; those on the political and economic margin are the ready targets: innovators, women, the poor. A scapegoat is assumed to bewitch others to obtain control of re-

> **In witch hunts, the leader or chief bully has tremendous power but will survive only as long as he or she has the sanction of enough people with sufficient fear of losing control and a desire for simplistic solutions**

sources or to get revenge for being marginalized; the accuser is prejudged to be in the right.

In witch-hunting crazes, the leader or chief bully has tremendous power, but he or she will survive only as long as he or she has the sanction of enough people with sufficient fear of losing control and a desire for simplistic solutions to their anxieties. Hitler could not have persecuted the Jews, or McCarthy innocent people, without having a sufficient power base to begin with. A bully's gift is the ability to feel the malaise of people and to simplistically pinpoint its assumed evil cause. When the craze dies down, the bully tends to be blamed, and people conveniently forget how they cooperated with him or her.

CHRIST WAS BULLIED

Palestine, at the time of Christ, was in a political and religious breakdown stage. The nation was alive with competing sects and groups, so it was inevitable that Jesus and his followers should suffer the oppression of ongoing bullying.

Persistent intimidation begins with Herod, who wants to destroy the newborn Messiah and is prepared to flatter the magi and kill the innocent to do so (Matt. 2:1–18). Herod is enraged when the wise

men expose his manipulative scheming. Jesus experiences the power of group bullying immediately after his proclamation of his public ministry (Luke 4:28–30). Pharisees are excessively meticulous about details of the law and commonly refuse to dialogue with Jesus, doing their best to trip him up in public (John 8:3–11). He quickly becomes a scapegoat by being identified with Beelzebub (Matt. 12:24), and finally the bullies plot to kill him as a scapegoat (John 18:14).

RESPONSES TO BULLYING

Bullying will always occur, and servant-leadership will need to identify it and call its perpetrators to account gently and firmly. Victims of harassment are not expected to tolerate what is happening. What is to be done?

- Keep exact information about times and places in which the bullying takes place.
- If one is the victim, it is unwise to meet with a bully alone; the victim will rarely win in the encounter because the bully will relish the chance to dominate the interaction.
- It is impossible to counteract a bully through logical and rational arguments, no matter how well prepared. Harassment is not a rationally based process; it is rooted in the inner inadequacies of the bully and supported by a particular type of dysfunctional culture. If one must meet alone with a bully, he or she should do so as calmly as possible. When a bully is challenged, he or she will become more enraged and vindictive. If the victim loses his or her temper, this is just what the bully wants. Violence begets further violence. St Paul's advice is right: act with "patience . . . gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22).
- Changing a bully's ways necessitates an inner change on the bully's part and a cultural shift toward the servanthood model. Culture change by one individual is difficult at any time, but more so if a culture encourages bullying. Therefore, if possible, network with people with whom the problem can be shared, strategies developed, and support given.
- A bully will want the victim to feel guilty, humiliated, and powerless. An effective counter to this is the art of nonviolence as articulated by Christ (Matt. 7:12; Matt. 5:44). This is not an otherworldly, utopian idea; it is a realistic strategy for all human interaction. Christ's teaching encourages victims neither to respond with violence nor to accept their humiliation. That only feeds the rage of the bully. Jesus explains his nonviolent strategy through examples that his listeners would have understood (see *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* by Walter Wink). For example, Roman soldiers could bully people to carry their baggage only a limited distance. If a person offered to carry the burden an extra mile, this would place a Roman soldier in the embarrassing situation of violating Roman military practice (Matt. 5:41). Likewise, a person is left naked if their tunic and cloak are handed over to a bully, but to be naked in public is a violation of Jewish law, and the intimidator would be highly embarrassed (Matt. 5:40). In other words, Jesus is saying, do not remain passive when confronted with a bully; instead, find some nonviolent way to reassert your dignity—which may mean doing things that may embarrass the bully.
- Sometimes it may be necessary for a victim to seek employment elsewhere before his or her health breaks down. Some situations may never change.
- Be alert to situations in which people are harassed, and network with others to help the victims. The victim first needs to feel safe because someone understands what is happening to him or her (see Psalm 142:4–5, 7); then he or she needs assistance in confronting the evil. To overlook what is happening is to collude in the intimidation. Of course, to whistleblow is to risk becoming a target of a bully, but it is gospel imperative to avoid collusion (Luke 4:18).

THE CHURCH AND BULLYING

The church must "give witness to justice," but "she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their own eyes." Therefore, there is need for "an examination of the modes of acting . . . within the church itself" (Synod of Bishops, 1971). Prior to Vatican II, the church's culture was a traditional Eurocentric one. Boundaries were clear: Catholics were defined in opposition to Protestants, who were seen as threatening the Body of Christ. Internal administrative structures and customs were rigidly hierarchical, patriarchal, and unchanging. Rituals were highly formal and impersonal, often reinforcing a sense of spiritual elitism or power over the "less graced." This mode legitimized the harassment of those who did not fit the boundaries (e.g., non-Catholics, women, people from different cultures).

The dominant culture model in the church changed after Vatican II to that of the breakdown as a consequence of the theological updating. The Council called the church back to the purity of its Christ-given founding—that is, the church is to consist of a pilgrim people aware of their powerlessness and therefore aware of the need for collaborative action to evangelize the world. The cultural chaos

that has resulted has catalyzed a variety of sects in which people struggle for a renewed sense of order and meaning.

Sects are minority ideological movements claiming exclusive access to truth or salvation. Those who are absolutely convinced that their position is the only right one are dangerous. Such conviction is at the heart not only of dogmatism but also of its more destructive relation, fanaticism. Dialogue with fanatics is impossible. In the post-Council church, these sects are marked by restorationist or fundamentalist qualities. They may seek to bully their opponents into submission, and they name scapegoats to blame for the church's contemporary difficulties—including people who favor liberation theology and its concern for the poor, those who critique capitalism, and those who encourage women to have their rightful place in the church. Catholic fundamentalists ignore church teachings that highlight the need for involvement in social justice, preferring to concern themselves with matters of accidental consequence.

Fundamentalism is not a bullying disease of the Right exclusively; it can be found among people who intolerantly condemn anything of the past as evil or contrary to Vatican II values. No matter what form fundamentalism takes, however, rational or logical arguments alone will be ineffective. People caught up in emotional reactions to culture change yearn for symbols of security and identity that are meaningful to them. They will bully others to protect them.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

Bullying is abuse of power by persons or groups because of the authority they hold. Such harassment is to be found everywhere—office, home, sports field, politics, church. Often it is unimportant, but revolutions emerge from an accumulation of trivial bullying. Those who feel powerless can mirror in their turn the abuse they have received at the hands of bullies.

A significant problem is that bullying occurs both consciously and unconsciously. The weak are alive to their powerlessness, but the strong are not always as cognizant of the pressures they place on those who depend on them because of their power. As bullying springs out of primitive forces in human nature and culture, the most effective counter to abuse begins with our own self and cultural analysis. Can I admit to my inner yearning to dominate others? Do I really believe that to follow Christ means to acknowledge my proneness to sin and the abuse of others? What in my workplace, church, or civil society oppresses people? Do I see that true strength is to be found ultimately in recognizing that "when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10)?

RECOMMENDED READING

Adams, A. *Bullying at Work.* London, England: Virago, 1992.

Arbuckle, G. *Refounding the Church: Dissent for Leadership.* Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993.

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Wink, W. *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination.* Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress, 1992.

Wright, L., and M. Smye. *Corporate Abuse.* London, England: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

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Song Unexcelled

James Torrens, S.J.

Nothing of youth to give you,
   Love, my old love,
Though at my city window
   Comes your wake-up call.

Shadow, encroaching shadow
   Of promises unkept,
You cloud the long look back
   To the holding of hands.

Little of faith to give you,
   Love, my old love,
Needing a breast against me,
   Needing the stout arms.

Alone, all alone garden
   Where once was company,

Those absences I pay
   When I was elsewhere bent.

Little heart left for you,
   Love, my old love,
Except to long and long
   You close enclose me.

Death, old companion death
   Unfriending, sure,
Chip chipping,
   Who mightier than you?

Love, my first love,
   Tattooed all over me
And still unquenchable,
   I'll tell the world who.

As should be obvious, I wrote the attached poem with an eye on the Song of Songs. This astonishing entry in the Hebrew scriptures claims to be the love song par excellence—a boast that, despite such heavy competition, hardly exaggerates. What do we find repeatedly in these eight chapters? The flowery head-to-toe praises of the young body; the hide-and-seek and serenade and other mating games; the sexual metaphors of blossom, fruitfulness, entrance to a secret garden, blissful repose.

This glowing celebration of attractiveness and attraction can seem an anomaly, given the adult vigilance over the life of the senses that the rest of the Bible seems to promote. The Jews themselves have not always been at ease with this sunny and romantic text amid their sacred pages and have at times argued about the propriety of reading it or the minimum age for reading it (30, we were once told). Recently, when a passage of the Song of Songs turned up among the choices of a cousin of mine for his wedding, I mentioned the Jewish misgivings about it in the homily. One of the groomsmen told me afterwards that he had grown up in Israel and that this debate about the book was still very much under way.

One does need to point out that the scriptures open with a creation scene, naive though it is and patriarchal, which puts the sexual encounter frankly: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2, 24–5). Genesis, of course, underlines the domestic commitment—the assumption of generativity, to use the concept established by Erik Erikson (and drawn from Freud) for a later stage of the life cycle. The Song of Songs, on the other hand, highlights the two earlier steps in Erikson's scheme: the self-discovery in another's eyes that is proper to adolescence and the phase of intimacy meant to follow upon it.

So just how did the Song of Songs get into the Bible? From the standpoint of primary causes, we may credit divine inspiration, or God's providence, with making sure that it did. From the standpoint of human authorship, it no doubt earned its place on the same grounds as the melancholy book of Ecclesiastes, for unforgettable phrasing. Scripture commentators tell us that some brilliant compiler made a convincing sequence, or dramatic framework, out of disparate love songs, and the pious Jews could say afterwards, yes, that is how God meant it to be. Christian attitudes on sex have verged into the severe often enough, but the oldest of the Catholic nuptial blessings still calls the marital union, with some hyperbole, "the one blessing that was not forfeited by original sin or washed away by the flood."

The reading available for Catholic marriages from the Song of Songs concludes with some reminders that eros, if taken seriously by inviting another life and personality entirely into one's own, gives one an unknown strength and touches one with a fire that cannot be abated. The woman asks the man to make her the seal he wears around his neck, the seal on his heart, the personal stamp on everything he does. And the two of them are cautioned as well as heartened: "Love is strong as death, jealousy as relentless as Sheol. The flash of it is a flash of fire, a flame of the Lord himself. Love no flood can quench, no torrents drown" (8: 6–7).

The Song of Songs received an allegorical reading early in the Christian era. *The International Bible Commentary* tells us that the Song was a favorite of the early church fathers as they developed their ecclesiology: "It portrayed fresh, young love against a background of a new creation, a generous and faithful spousal love that was completely reciprocal." The Middle Ages, in their turn, saw the real flowering of commentaries on the Song, over a hundred of them.

Jean Leclercq, O.S.B., in his classic *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, informs us that the Song, or Canticle of Canticles, was the most studied book of the Old Testament—something we can verify from manuscript lists in monastic libraries. Saint Bernard returned to the Canticles over a period of 18 years as the subject of 86 sermons, and he never got beyond the third chapter. The whole Cistercian tradition followed Bernard in this mystical interpretation. Leclercq called this collection of Bernard's sermons "the masterpiece of medieval literature."

The more hardbitten observer may say that this was one way to bootleg the life of the senses into the austerities of the monastery. To begin simply with the obvious, however, the appeals of the beautiful cannot just be written off as self-indulgence. And how could one not realize that the Song of Songs establishes for all time an image of the Beloved that gives a real heart to religious commitment? It might be possible to accuse allegorical commentary of diluting the sensuality out of the Song of Songs so as to promote an otherworldly or Platonic spirituality—but besides promoting a stereotype, to say that would be to claim that readers of the Song can somehow skim or skip the imagery. If sublimation was at work in the likes of Saint Bernard, it was the harnessing of eros to agape, of cordial energy to religious dedication.

Sigmund Freud, a medical man with a view of humanity as totally corporal and material, introduced the concept of sublimation to explain every investment of desire and energy apart from sexual relations. The term, in his usage, implies some sleight of hand—an almost chemical treatment of a powerful substance that denatures it while at the same time giving the ego room to expand. But for anyone reading our common humanity, the investment of desire, of purpose, of commitment need not at all disjoin body and spirit. We are not any less sexual when devoting ourselves to care of the sick or the poor or the divine worship; nor are we any less religious, necessarily, when acting out our marriage vows.

Dom Leclercq explains that in the Middle Ages, whereas scholastic commentary was interested in God's relations with the entire church and in probing revealed truth, "the monastic commentary's object is rather God's relations with each soul, Christ's presence in it, the spiritual union realized through charity." And Leclercq adds, "The commentary on the Canticle, especially for the Cistercians, is the equivalent of a treatise on the love of God. . . . The Canticle is the poem of the pursuit which is the basis for the whole program of monastic life: *quaerere Deum*, 'to seek God.'"

The fact of biblical interpretation, then—indeed, its wonder—is that the most sensory, most romantic and emotionally expressive of texts in the Hebrew Bible has become, par excellence, the staple of mystical theology and of heartfelt, all-out love of God. Nowhere does this appear more evident than in the Spiritual Canticle (Cantico Espiritual) of Saint John of the Cross—40 stanzas of poetry composed in 1578 during his confinement in a windowless cell by a rival Carmelite faction. Six years later Saint John helped us to sound the depths of this poem with the remarkable prose explanation he wrote for Saint Teresa.

Clearly, John of the Cross had absorbed and meditated deeply on the Song of Songs. The poem is a classic of the apophatic way—the theology and spirituality that build on the awareness that God is hidden, mysterious, far beyond our probing or considerations. Reflecting on some early stanzas (4 to

10), Saint John comments that creatures speak at best stammeringly of God and that the affairs of the world inflict wounds of sorrow, displeasure, and blockage of the divine, but that God nonetheless touches our lives and attracts us continually, despite our unworthiness, not least of all through the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Amid our cloud of unknowing, then, the divine Beauty, by "sketches and tokens of love," awakens a great and continual desire; our faith "contains and hides the image and beauty of the Beloved" (comment on 11 and 12, as translated by Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D., and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D.). Our restlessness, our sense of incompletion, our experience of the tempter, our proneness to absorption in the sensory world become a prayer for the divine lover, the Bridegroom, to disperse all oppositions and rebellions.

Starting midway in the Spiritual Canticle, the erotic imagery of the Song of Songs becomes more pronounced and unmistakable. John takes it as a language of spiritual espousal. At the equivalent of a wedding feast, the bride *(esposa)* and her Beloved *(Amado)* "communicate their goods and delights with a wine of savory love in the Holy Spirit." This frail Spanish monk, five feet tall, whom no intimidation could cow, wants us to accept that the spiritual life all comes down to a verse from the Song of Songs: "I for my Beloved and my Beloved for me." Transparently, the Cantico Espiritual gives us his own soul story. His experience and his imagination of divine love draw continually on the Song of Songs as both illumination and shadow of the love of God.

Such is the admirable and so precious calling that remains open to us always, no matter our slackness, the record of our on-and-off response, even our late-life misgivings. Dante in the *Divine Comedy*, trembling at his approach to the world beyond after the full revelation of his sinfulness and of the world's, pleaded that he was not Aeneas, not Saint Paul. We can plead that we are not Saint Teresa, not Saint John. But we don't get away that easy.
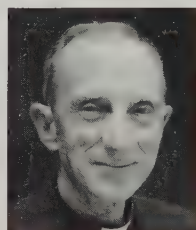
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Addressing Anger in Spiritual Direction

David D. Thayer, S.S., Ph.D.,
and Robert W. Lappin, Ph.D.

February always seems more grey than any other month. During his regular spiritual direction session, John L., a seasoned priest of fifteen years, reflected that murky blandness. (Certain aspects of this case description and of the others in this article have been changed to protect the identity of the directees. Examples concerning directees are used with their knowledge and permission.) "I don't know what has happened to my prayer," he said. "While I never felt much, there was always a sense of presence, a warmness that told me God was there. Now he's not. I still keep my regular schedule, but God doesn't seem to be around—it's like he's gone south for the winter. I certainly haven't been able to find him—at mass, in the chapel, when I sit in my room late at night or early in the morning.

"Everything tastes like ashes, feels damp and musty. I know that the real test of my prayer isn't in what I feel during it, but in its fruits. But even those seem like they're limp and lifeless. My preaching seems bland, at least to me. People still come to me after mass to thank me for what I said, but you know the reality behind that. Even if they seem attentive while I'm speaking, I feel glassy-eyed. The silence that used to tell me that people were really listening isn't there. The room seems flat and close when I leave the pulpit.

"I can still put on the right face for counseling, look interested. I think I still listen pretty well, too. But I just don't seem to be really there. My inner ear seems tinny. I hear the words, but they have no resonance. I used to be able to put things together much more quickly. I'm still effective, but counseling doesn't have the same charge for me it once did.

"When I am called to celebrate mass or the other sacraments, I say them. I don't think I really worship anymore. All the words, pauses, and gestures are there, but I'm not. The butterflies I had in the sacristy for years seem to have disappeared. I've lost the sense that what I'm about to do is holy. Now I just want to get it over with—escape to my room, curl up under the covers, watch the soaps. I don't even have the energy for light reading, never mind serious texts, although I know I should do it.

"I'm cordial to the other priests in the house, even the pastor. You know the struggles I've had with him. He's more interested in raising money than in really giving some vision and direction to the parish. I feel defeated every time I try to suggest something new. Lately I haven't had anything new to suggest. We're like a group of polite strangers when we sit down to meals. Everything is congenial, but I don't think anyone feels like he belongs there.

"I could go on and on, but you get the picture. I'm like that dying spider plant over there. What did you do, forget to water it again? There's no water in the desert of my life. I trudge through the sands of my duties, but there is no oasis. Sometimes I think if I had the money, I'd just get up and leave. Write children's books or clip coupons. On a Thursday— Thursday always seemed like the best day to disappear.

"When I'm really honest about it, this has been going on for a long time now. I guess the past month has really caused it to ripen, if you can call all this lifelessness—even loneliness—a ripening."

ANGER A COMMON THEME

Rustout, burnout, whatever you call it—the condition expressed in John's description of his life is a lot more common among clergy and religious than a single case indicates. Low-level depression, isolation, lack of enthusiasm about vocation, loneliness, irritability, and the rest are all symptoms of a common factor: an inability or unwillingness to deal with anger. In fact, our experience indicates that anger (along with its adjutant behaviors) is a common underlying theme for a substantial minority, if not the majority, of those ordained, religious, and lay persons whom we have had the privilege of guiding on their spiritual journeys.

While much has been written recently about anger from both the therapeutic and the managerial, conflict-resolution perspectives, little attention has been paid to this fundamental emotion as a possible positive force in the spiritual life. In fact, popular spiritual approaches to anger have tended to regard it only as a deadly sin, as a force to be eradicated through the cultivation of detachment and disposability to the Spirit. While we believe that the cultivation of those spiritual attitudes, properly understood, is an aspect of dealing with anger, it does not tell the whole story.

The Fathers of the Church remind us that trying to eradicate anger is futile. Rather, like all deadly sins, anger behaviors need to be transformed, to be released from their tendency to cut off life, so that the energies this primal passion provides can be harnessed in service to the enflaming, zealous power of the Spirit. It is a matter of training the incensive or spirited part of the soul so that it can hear and act upon the implicit call to conversion within the phenomenon of anger itself. Properly handled, anger increases persons' desire for God by giving them the energy to detach from preconceptions and to open their eyes to the larger possibilities and hopes that God has in store for us.

Indeed, *chen qi*, the Chinese word for anger, reminds us that far from necessarily being a negative force, anger is often a positive one. Translated literally, the term means "to increase or generate the life force." The problem facing the spiritual director, then, is to assist the directee in putting anger into a larger, life-giving perspective that rechannels this emotional energy into promoting the final goal of the spiritual life: union with God.

Our observations thus take a different perspective than those usually offered on addressing anger as an issue in the spiritual life. We want to consider it as an energy that the directee can utilize to develop relationships, especially his or her relationship with God. Far from being a negative force, anger, properly channeled, provides an affective impetus to the development of a greater sense of self-knowledge and self-responsibility (the ancient, forgotten Greek virtue of *sophrosyne*) by teaching the directee how to use anger as a transformative agent, both to cooperate in God's larger plan of creation and redemption and to surrender to the inevitable fact that God is God and we are not.

First, we will make some general observations about the pattern of conversion that is implicit in the phenomenon of anger through an emotive/existential interpretation of a series of scriptural passages that exemplify that pattern. Second, we will offer a number of concrete suggestions about how the director might assist the directee in attending to and acting on this pattern in his or her own life.

ANGER IN SCRIPTURES

Five examples from the scriptures reveal that addressing anger entails an invitation to respond to the world in a larger, more inclusive manner. As such, anger presents a crisis to at least one of the parties involved in the incident related—a crisis that is properly resolved by recognizing new possibilities and acting on them. Sometimes one party is called to transform his or her behavior, to participate alternatively in a larger vision of reality. At other times one party is called to cooperate with the reality of suffering in a way that transforms it into a quest either to probe the mysteries of God more deeply or to effect a transformation of God's faithfulness by insisting that God be God.

From Depression to Compassion. Perhaps the primary way in which anger manifests itself negatively in our experience with religious persons is via an avoidance that leads to depression. Rather than admit to their anger, they flee from the emotion. The energy, however, does not disappear. Instead, it

turns back upon the angry person and manifests itself as a form of depression. A classic scriptural example of this is the story of the prophet Jonah.

Called by the Lord to prophesy against the city of Nineveh, Jonah refuses the vocation. Why becomes clear by the end of the tale. Jonah is angry with the Lord's demand for at least two reasons. First, he is called to prophesy to a foreign city that, in his mind, should receive no favors from the Lord. Second, he is afraid that God might act like God, for prophecy always allows for conversion. While Jonah would be satisfied with the destruction of the great city, he, as the story reveals, is not so displeased with God's relenting from his threatened punishment upon its conversion.

Instead of revealing his dissatisfaction, however, Jonah runs from the task placed before him. As he does so, he immediately manifests signs of depression. His first action after boarding ship is to fall fast asleep. He remains in this state despite a great storm that causes his shipmates to cast overboard anything that might help cause the ship to sink. Like many depressed people, his refusal to deal with his anger makes him unaware of what is going on around him, leaving others to deal with its effects.

Aroused from his sleep, he still refuses to address the situation. Instead, he seeks death. Confronted by the panicked and bewildered passengers, he admits that he is the source of the turbulence around them. Rather than explore the ways in which his anger affects others, however, he tries to get them to remove him from the situation: "Take me up and throw me into the seas; then the sea will quiet down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you" (Jon. 1:2).

All of us have seen this scenario played out in some form. The depressed person walks into the room and at once the air seems to darken and tighten. Everyone immediately becomes cautious. But instead of calling that person to address what lies beneath the situation, we join him or her in avoiding the anger that feeds the depression. As a result, everyone seems disturbed by the negative energy, ready to flee the lightning that may accompany it.

With Jonah's companions, we realize that there is something wrong with this, for they pray that they not be held accountable for the death of an innocent man. We often do something similar, talking to one another about what we would like to do to help the depressed person, but also feeling helpless about doing so. Indeed, attempts on our part to address the situation are often met with such lethargy and silent hostility that there seems to be nothing that we can do. Depressed people have a way of swallowing everything into the fog of their unfocused anger. So we end up driving them further into their depression by joining in their conspiracy to cut themselves off from the world around them—precisely by not addressing our own anger, which arises in response to their unfocused and unexpressed anger. We only further isolate depressed people in this way.

In Jonah's case, at least, this is not necessarily a bad ploy. Thrown overboard, he ends up in the belly of a fish—a dark, damp place—where he is forced to deal with himself and his depression. There, rather than being suicidal, he admits that he has been living in darkness, swallowed up in a sea of despair, sunk in a bottomless pit from which there seems to be no escape. Sensing that isolation, however, reminds him that there is finally a great illusion in it. In reality, he is not alone: "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord" (Jon. 2:7).

By addressing the depression in at least a minimal way, Jonah begins to harness the energy that allowed it to arise it the first place. He responds to the Lord's demand that he preach against the city of Nineveh. He has not fully dealt with the source of his anger, however, as is revealed in his reaction to his success as a prophet. When God relents from the punishment he was ready to mete out upon the city of Nineveh, "it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry" (Jon. 4:1).

Interestingly, this new level of anger reveals the source of his original frustration while also uncovering a deeper spiritual issue that underlies that source. Instead of completely running from his anger this time, Jonah expresses it directly to God: "That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repent of evil" (Jon. 4:2).

The prophet is angry precisely because he has been called to do God's work, on God's terms. His real spiritual issue is control. Jonah wants life on his own terms, to serve God without surprises. When he can't get his way, he begins to slip back into his depression, begging God, "take my life from me, I beseech you, for it is better for me to die than to live" (Jon. 4:3). To drive his point home, Jonah then leaves the city to see what will become of it. He leaves hoping that God will relent from his reluctance and destroy the city. This rekindles his depression.

Interestingly, God uses this second manifestation of Jonah's depression to drive his own point home. As Jonah sits in his insistence that God act on Jonah's terms, God causes a plant to grow over Jonah's head, "to save him from his discomfort" (Jon. 4:6). As soon as Jonah begins to enjoy the plant, however, the plant withers, forcing him to confront the issue that has driven his anger from the beginning. An east wind

rises, and the heat of the day seems to increase. Thus, God uses the influences of nature to insist that Jonah deal with whatever prevents him from addressing reality in an appropriate manner.

Confronted with a situation over which he has no control, Jonah expresses his existential frustration. When asked by God, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" he responds, "I do well to be angry, angry enough to die" (Jon. 4:9). In the midst of this anger, God offers the challenge of conversion. Just as Jonah had no control over the plant but pities its passing, he also has no control over God's actions. "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night," God says. "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?" (4:10–11).

God does not take away Jonah's anger; rather, God uses it to teach Jonah to see a larger picture, to understand that what he desires in a small thing is exactly what God desires on a larger scale. God calls Jonah to reorient his anger, to join it to God's plan for redemption, rather than insist on understanding and doing everything on his own terms. God invites Jonah to use the energy of his anger to connect with others and call them to deeper life rather than to lash out against them in a punitive manner.

From Whining to Liberating Enjoyment. A second anger behavior that calls for conversion is whining. Once again, the person refuses to deal directly with the anger, diverting it into a manipulative behavior that at once bemoans his or her state in life and tries to get someone else to fix it. Rather than respond to the changes in self-understanding and behavior that the anger calls for, the person acts as if it is another's fault. "If only that person would act the way I want," he or she seems to say, "everything would be all right." A close examination of that anger, however, reveals that it contains a call for self-conversion that frees the individual to act in ways initially considered unimaginable. The story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38–42) demonstrates this point well.

While traveling with his disciples, Jesus enters the home of Martha and Mary for rest and refreshment. Martha busies herself with the details of hospitality. Seemingly self-sufficient, she finally becomes exasperated, but she does not deal with her anger directly. Instead, she triangulates her anger, trying manipulatively to position the Lord in the middle of her unspoken quarrel with her sister: "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her

then to help me" (Luke 10:40). Martha at once whines and exploitively insists that another take care of her problem.

Jesus refuses to fall into the trap. Instead, he corrects Martha and forces her to deal directly with the source of her frustration: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41–42).

In those few words, Jesus cuts to the heart of Martha's issue. Afraid to assert who she is and what she needs, she busies herself with a thousand and one tasks. She tries to buy appreciation through what she does rather than demand it because of who she is. When she does not get appreciation, she focuses on the one who is receiving the benefits of her serving, Mary. But even then she does not deal directly with the issue. Rather than asking her sister for assistance, Martha complains about her to the guest of honor while trying to manipulate him into conveying her rebuke for her.

Mary, her sister, implicitly reveals an alternative. Given the normal relationships between men and women in the ancient Mediterranean, she does the unseemly. She chooses to be hospitable not by doing many things but by being with the Lord. She refuses to stay in the background, as would be expected of women in that culture. While Mary's actions leave her open to condemnation for not maintaining the status quo, her directness in dealing with the realities of hospitality gives her immediate satisfaction. Mary, not Martha—despite all the work that Martha does—receives the fruits of that virtue.

Thus, the tale both calls Martha to conversion and shows her how to attain it. Instead of condemning her sister for not doing the usual, Jesus invites Martha to do what Mary does. While encouraging Martha to do something new, he does not dismiss her anger; he acknowledges it. He reminds her that her anger is indeed a key to the situation at hand: it is a signal that something is wrong. Something is missing in her own attempts at hospitality, which should bring the pleasure of companionship to both host and guest.

The resolution of that frustration, however, is not what Martha, in her whining, immediately offers as a solution. Martha needs to change her whole attitude about hospitality. The dishes can wait. She needs to engage directly with those who have come to visit her. To arrive at this conclusion, she must untwist her anger and deal with it directly by questioning herself and the situation. What is really wrong here? What do I need to do to be satisfied? Only then can she see the alternative the Lord has offered as a viable one,

and see in her sister's unusual behavior a solution that satisfies her real desires.

Unfortunately, Luke does not tell us whether Martha was able to use her anger this way or not. Despite the possible historical-critical difficulties the connection involves, the appearance of Martha and Mary in the gospel of John (11:17–44) makes us suspect that she has learned her lesson. There, Martha directly confronts Jesus with her anger at the death of her brother Lazarus, even though she at least partially believes that he can do nothing about the situation. Ever practical, she reminds Jesus that Lazarus has been in the tomb four days and now stinks. Jesus must question her faith in him a second time before he calls the dead man back to life. He thus, we suspect, uses the energy within her anger—the energy that gives her faith to trust that the Lord can overcome the impossible—to assist him in bringing forth life from the tomb.

Here it is a matter of recognizing that she truly is helpless on her own accord. There is nothing in herself that Martha needs to change. This does not cause her to become any less angry. Rather, she needs to go more deeply into her anger, to unite it in faith to the greater saving power of God. God, in turn, uses that anger to fulfill his plan and his purpose. Martha's anger truly recapitulates the Chinese word for anger, *chen qi*, to generate the life force.

From Genocide to Justice. A third way in which anger often initially manifests itself is as murderous rage. This type of anger behavior comes forth in either indirect or direct hostility. Indirect hostility may often be felt as a block in conversation. We feel as if a brick wall is bearing down on us, unsure why we are being attacked but knowing that we are. While the other's words may be pleasant or even seductive on the surface, they contain a dark force that makes us want to defend ourselves against some unknown predator. In direct hostility, the anger is less disguised but still blocked. Rather than use the anger to generate life and overcome obstacles, the directly hostile person wants to end the problem in a manner that screams against life. He or she may punitively try to strangle another's soul with demeaning sarcasm or may even literally murder another. Interestingly, a classic example of this type of anger is related in the Scriptures as a case of God's wrath. (For a discussion of God's seemingly endless anger and displeasure, see Jack Miles's *God: A Biography*).

In the Book of Exodus (32:1–14), the Israelites grow anxious about Moses' delay in coming down from Mount Sinai. At once angry at feeling abandoned and afraid of that abandonment, they turn to

Aaron the high priest. "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us; as for Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him" (32:1). The Israelites react to Moses' delay not with patience but with hostility. They express their anger at being abandoned by abandoning the One whom Moses represents. Afraid of this displaced hostility, Aaron consents to their desires and constructs a golden calf. He follows their wishes lest he become the focus of their rage.

Seeing this, God, to say the least, is not amused. In fact, God is so furious that he sets out to destroy them, saying to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation" (Exod. 32:9).

God's hostile expression of his anger in word before action reveals its complexity. He at once demonstrates the extent of his wrath and his ambivalence about acting on it. On the one hand, God will destroy the Israelites if left alone; on the other, he remains steadfast to his promise to make Moses the inheritor of his promise to Abraham: he will make of Moses' descendants a great nation. In the end, God doesn't want to go through with his threat, even though part of his rage seems to lead him in that direction.

Moses sees in God's words an opportunity suggested by his own earlier experience. Prior to his own conversion, Moses committed murder because there was no one to restrain his act. "One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (Exod. 2:11). He fled from the consequences of his murderous hostil-

ity only to discover that his anger at the mistreatment of his fellow Israelites needed to be redirected. In the encounter with God on Sinai (3:1–14), Moses learns that he must refocus his anger. He needs not to destroy those who harm his people but to work to deliver his community from their oppression. One overcomes evil not by fighting against it but by fighting for the good.

Faced now with the evil of God's expression of his anger as murderous hostility, Moses seeks to refocus it. He recalls for God their initial encounter—the encounter that finally enabled Moses to transform his own anger from hostility into seeking justice. Initially, Moses reminds God that what happened to him when confronted with his murderous deed (Exod. 2:13–15) will happen to God as well, saying that God will lose all credibility if he carries out his attack. Moses asks, "Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent he brought them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'?" (32:12a). Thus Moses forces God to look directly at his own hostility and its evil consequences.

On the other hand, Moses doesn't attempt to remove God's anger; he tries to redirect it by reminding God of his previous promises. "Turn away from your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against your people," Moses implores. "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever'" (32:12b–13). In doing so, Moses reminds God that his hostility harms not only those present but also himself and those with whom he has entered into a convenantal relationship. A sobering thought: how many of us lose when we don't deal with our hostility directly?

God relents but promises to bring to justice those who have done wrong against him: "Whoever has sinned against me, him I will blot out of my book. But now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel will go before you. Nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them" (Exod. 32:33). God's genocidal wrath is now rechanneled into seeking punishment against those who have sinned against him. No longer will he kill indiscriminately. Instead, he will insist on his prerogative as a just God to turn the sin of those who sinned against him back upon them.

From Blaming to Participation in Mystery. The Book of Job presents a further example of the patterns in the stories examined above. Here the resolution is found in transforming the anger inherent in the tale into the probing of mystery. Job, the quintessential blameless and upright man (Job 1:8), is put to the test by God. Deprived of family and fortune, afflicted with sores, Job at first is unwilling to confront God directly. Instead, he curses the day of his birth: "Let the day perish wherein I was born . . . Let that day be darkness! May God above not seek it, nor light shine upon it . . . Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, whom God has hedged in?" (3:3–4, 23).

In tormented rage, Job rails against God indirectly. He wishes that he had never been born. In doing so, Job wants to cut off any relationship he had or might have had with the One who gave him life. If God is to visit evil and torment upon him, then Job wants nothing to do with him:

I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I the sea or a sea monster that you set a guard over me? When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint,' then you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions, so that I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones. I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are a breath. What is man, that you make so much of him, that you set your mind upon him, visit him every morning, and test him every moment? How long will you not look away from me, nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle? If I sin, what do I do to you, you watcher of men? Why have you made me your mark? Why have I become a burden to you? Why do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I shall lie in the earth; you will seek me, but I shall not be. (Job 7:11–21)

Job blames God for all his woes, for he knows that he is an upright man. Rather than face his suffering as suffering, he denounces God as its source. Thus, while his anger is an appropriate first response to what has happened, Job twists that anger. Refusing to use his anger to question what is really happening, he seeks to blame and punish another.

Four people try to do to Job what he is doing to God. Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu insist that Job has done something wrong (Job 2:11; 32:2). Job resists this explanation, searching his life and finding himself blameless. It is not that he would not accept their explanation were it true, but that the explanation does not work in his case. He sees himself as an innocent man upon whom trials have been placed by God. In doing so, Job paradoxically accepts the interpretive framework of his accusers. He is not guilty, so God must be. How can God allow the innocent to suffer? Is not such a God evil and to be resisted, or at least put on trial?

As the book goes on, Job insists more stridently on

his position: "Will you speak falsely for God, and speak deceitfully for him? Will you show partiality toward him, will you plead the case for God?" (13:7–8) He tries everything to turn his friends against God, finally demonizing him as a silent oppressor by whom Job is left abandoned, besieged on every side:

> If indeed you magnify yourselves against me, know then that God has put me in the wrong, and closed his net about me. Behold I cry out violence! But I am not answered; I cry aloud but there is no justice. He has walled up my way, so that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness upon my paths . . . He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone, and my hope has he pulled up like a tree . . . His troops have come on together; they have cast up siege works against me, and encamp around my tent . . . I am repulsive to my wife, loathsome to the sons of my own mother. Even young children despise me; when I rise they talk against me. (19:7–18)

When God finally speaks, he puts everyone on trial. He rebukes Job's hearers for claiming to have an explanation (Job 42:7), and he rebukes Job for seeking a false one (38–42). In the fashion of classic oriental wisdom literature, he reproves them for their ignorance and their attempts to use what little they know to control reality. In doing so, God invites them to understand that Job's suffering is finally not a matter of fault. Rather, suffering must be probed from an entirely different perspective. It is always more than a moral problem, for even when evil is resisted, suffering must be grieved. Moreover, suffering must be probed until one finds the paths of God within it. God reminds Job that he has been with Job all along simply by speaking out of the whirlwind that is so symbolic of the chaos Job has felt in his suffering.

The acceptance of this larger perspective entails an ability to surrender oneself to mystery. Job repents, saying, "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me" (Job 42:3–4). He will not stop questioning God about the problem of suffering, but neither will he seek an explanation of it in human terms. Rather, Job understands that he must surrender himself more deeply to the mystery of the Divine if he is to find a way to live with suffering. Such surrender demands that we continue to stretch human understanding in a manner that at once seeks to comprehend the deepest mysteries of reality and knows that it can never fully do so. Entering into the light of the Divine is as blinding as entering into the fullness of darkness. Job is converted from an interpretive perspective that insists that humanity is the source of all judgment about truth, and hence control, to one that surrenders before the incomprehensible wealth of knowing in a way that always remembers that we do not know. Now he can use the energy he used to resist God to find a way of questioning that brings him closer.

From Demand to Fulfillment of Promise. A final scripture passage reveals a result of accepting one's fate while being angry about it. In Matthew's account of the passion of Jesus, the bystanders rightly note that Jesus is calling upon Elijah when he cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46–47). The return of the prophet Elijah was considered by the Jews to be the final act of the inbreaking of God's kingdom, the transformation of reality by the reestablishment of God's sovereignty over a creation that had gone astray.

What is not often noticed about the passage, however, is that the kingdom realizes itself in a new way as a result of Jesus' angry insistence that God be God. On the cross, Jesus suffers the deepest human suffering. He feels abandoned, even by God. Totally isolated, he cries out against the loss of the deepest intimacy that has marked his life, the loss of the very relationship that has led him to the cross. Suspended between heaven and earth, belonging to neither, Jesus responds to his loss not with a cry of despair but with the evocation of Psalm 22. Jesus uses the psalm to recapitulate the anguish of his suffering and to insist that God be faithful to his promises: "For he has not spurned nor disdained the wretched man in his misery, nor did he turn his face away from him, but when he cried out to him, he heard him." (Ps. 22:25). He properly and directly expresses his anger as a way of protesting against his suffering and abandonment while seeking deeper union with God.

From the internal perspective of the narrative, God is reminded who he is and responds accordingly: he raises Jesus from the dead. In doing so, he transforms the promise he has made never to abandon humanity. He fulfills it on an even deeper level—the level of eternal life. Truly, Jesus' anger generates life, not only for himself but for the redemption of all creation.

The scriptural accounts we have discussed suggest that anger, when properly addressed, presents an opportunity for healing by giving us a more inclusive vision of the world and a greater participation in the larger plan of God, even if we do not always know what that plan entails. Anger is thus an energy that can open our eyes to ourselves by placing us within a greater perspective that gives us the energy to participate in the larger transforming process not only of ourselves but of creation and redemption, if we do not short-circuit that energy with unhelpful behaviors.

ADVICE FOR DIRECTORS

In a variety of ways, the spiritual director can assist directees in utilizing anger as a force for conversion or cooperation with God's larger plan. We offer a twofold approach to assist directors in this process, cognizant that it needs to be adapted to the particular circumstances and history of each directee. First, directees need to learn to identify anger, become aware of its role in their lives, and not be fooled by the myriad disguises that divert its expression. Second, directees need to bring their anger to prayer and express it as an existential aspect of themselves before the living God. On the other hand, they also need to find ways to deal with their anger in new, self-enhancing, relational ways within the concrete situations of their lives.

Identifying Anger. Because anger is often misconceived as a negative force that ought to be avoided and eradicated, the first step the spiritual director needs to take is to assist the directee in identifying correctly and accurately the manifestations of anger in his or her life. Too often, anger remains an unseen shadow that clouds the vision of directees, preventing them from seeing their actual condition. As a consequence, unaddressed anger freezes them into a behavioral loop not unlike the exercise wheel in a hamster's cage. While the wheel may provide some benefit to the hamster, the loop of unidentified anger only feeds on itself until the directee is lost in a killing fog of rage from which there seems to be no escape. Thus, directees need to learn how anger manifests itself in their lives before they can take positive steps to deal with it appropriately.

First and foremost, directors can help directees identify unexpressed anger by elucidating it as it appears in spiritual direction. For example, sometimes simply asking what a directee is experiencing internally as he or she is speaking in a particularly flat manner is sufficient to bring the anger into the open. Doing so also gives the directee—especially one who has difficulty expressing emotion for either cultural or psychological reasons—permission to feel (in this case, to be angry). At other times, the director may need to name the experience as anger to ascertain whether that is the emotional force underlying the directee's nonconnecting behavior and not some other passion. Both of these actions presume a level of trust, on the part of the director, of his or her own intuitions and of the relationship itself. They also demand a great deal of trust on the part of the directee.

Directors can also assist directees in identifying anger by expanding their utilization of the daily ex-

amen. Asking directees to record in their daily journals not only the events wherein they either found or did not find God but also the feelings attached to those events will often reveal a larger pattern of anger beneath them. It is important to pay attention to such feelings as boredom, anxiety, helplessness, loneliness, desire to please or appease, and "wheel-spinning," all of which can represent unexpressed anger in the directee's life. Until the underlying anger is identified, its energy for conversion cannot be harnessed.

Third, directors need to be attentive to habits that have the characteristics of addiction. Habitual masturbation may be a sign of an unwillingness or inability to deal with anger as much as a sign of unresolved loneliness or misdirected self-love. Overindulgence in eating, drinking, or smoking needs to be examined as a possible way in which the directee avoids anger. Patterns of isolation disguised as desire for solitude may also be motivated by unexpressed hostility. There are a variety of other similar habits, often cleverly hidden. One directee, for example, tended to escape to his room and curl up in bed with a mystery novel rather than deal with the anger underlying his depression. Although he remains an avid mystery fan, he now monitors his reading to ensure that consuming tales of serial killers is not a way of displacing energy he can use to create good.

As the director begins to assist the directee in identifying anger, he or she should not be surprised to discover that it is a pervasive force in the directee's life. In our experience, anger is a key that, when identified, can open up a variety of other feelings and memories. Anger often opens grief and begins to heal it, reveals an underlying compassion for others via a passion for justice, and develops a sense of self-integrity as it gives the directee the energy to avoid appeasing behavior. Far from being an isolated emotion or feeling, anger is actually more a manifestation of passion, that underlying life force that insists that persons stand out as who they are.

Directees thus may also discover that the more they identify and deal directly with their anger, the angrier they feel. If anger really is a matter of generating the life force, this is not surprising. Life generates life. Thus, the issue is not that one is angry or knows that one is angry; neither discovery makes the anger go away. Rather, the task is to learn to harness anger's creative forces in a manner that unites them with God's larger plan for the individual and the world.

Bringing Anger to Prayer. The director needs to help the directee not only identify anger but also harness its energy, assisting him or her to ensure

that it is utilized to further God's providential plan of creation and salvation rather than used as a destructive force. Identification with God's larger plan entails bringing that anger to prayer as an important part of the process of finding new ways of dealing with anger, of transforming it into a cooperative and creative force.

The director will discover that this is not always an easy task, for even bringing anger to prayer entails a conversion. Expressing one's anger to God can be perceived as a dangerous task. Who wants to risk the wrath of the omnipotent Father when one has difficulty dealing with the anger of one's earthly parent? The director needs to assure the directee that that comparison is misdirected, and may do so in at least five ways.

The first way is actually the simplest. The director needs to remind the directee that it is all right to yell at God—that God is powerful enough and mature enough to withstand even our worst temper tantrums. After all, if God is omniscient and omnipotent, doesn't he already know we are angry and stands ready to deal with us? We sometimes suggest that directees go for a walk to some private place where they can express their anger openly to God without fear of being interrupted or overheard by others. The seclusion provides a protected environment in which they can freely unburden their hearts. For many, interestingly, "screaming" at God enables them to experience God as a real person for the first time. They report back that they have never felt closer to God than during their initial experience of communicating this primal emotion with God directly.

Second, the director may introduce the directee to certain forms of Jewish spirituality in which "kibitzing" with God is a practiced art form. Parts of the Hasidic tradition are especially helpful for this. Using one of the stories about Rabbi Israel Ben Solomon provides a good introduction to this form of spirituality:

> One Yom Kippur, the Rabbi was eavesdropping on the prayers of his followers when he was arrested by the supplication of a farmer. "Lord God, Master of the Universe, I realize that I have not been faithful this past year. There have been times when I did not unyoke the oxen before sunset marked the beginning of Sabbath, and there have been times when I have said harsh words to my wife . . . and I will admit it, there have been times when I have struck my children rather than correct them . . . But you, Lord God, Master of the Universe, have not been so faithful either. There was that frost right after I planted the potatoes, so I had to start over again. And there was not enough rain for the season, so the spuds are a bit small . . . So, I tell you what. If you forgive me, I will forgive you. (Elie Weisel, *Sages and Dreamers*, 27-28)

While the directee will normally laugh at this point, demonstrating that he or she has partially got the point, the director must never forget the real punch line: "At that the Rabbi leaned over and, in a rage, declared: 'You fool! For that you should have demanded the redemption of the entirety of Israel!'"

The rabbi is furious because the farmer's anger is too small: he reproves God in hope of some benefit for himself alone, forgetting that reproof must always be placed in a larger context. It is also interesting to note that the rabbi's anger is not unusual; the Midrash is full of rabbinic disdain for Noah, because he saved only his family. He was not angry enough with God to argue with him for the sake of others, as did Moses and Abraham.

While referring to Jewish spirituality may seem exotic to some directees, the director need go no further than the Book of Psalms to demonstrate to the directee that anger is very much a part of the prayer life. Such psalms as 10, 13, 17, 22, 35, 137, and even the final verses of 139 show that anger, rightly directed, deepens one's relationship with God. These psalms and many others cry out to God for deliverance; they insist that God be a God who is faithful to his promises.

Using this type of psalm may also assist the directee in identifying the anger for which he or she initially does not have words. Asking directees to carry out a process of *lectio divina* that includes rewriting the psalm in their own words will also assist them not only in expressing their anger more directly but also in seeing it as the key to a larger process of conver-

sion. Like all scripture, each one of these psalms expresses knowledge of who God is and what he does for us. Praying them generates a willingness to submit to God's larger plan for us.

Fourth, the director may assist directees who have become aware of anger as a key theme in their lives to utilize their anger to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ, by asking them to create and pray the "angry mysteries" of the rosary. Focusing meditatively on such mysteries as "Jesus drives the money changers from the temple" or "Jesus rebukes his disciple's squabbling about position" enables directees to see how Jesus used anger to promote the kingdom and, through their identification with that anger, how to use their own anger to cooperate with his continuing plan of salvation.

Finally, the director can assist the directee through a variation on Ignatian contemplation. A directee prone to whining, for example, may wish to take the passage discussed in this article a step further. Asking the directee to carry on a conversation with Martha after praying this passage of scripture will either aid the directee's own process of conversion or assist him or her in identifying hindering patterns of personal behavior.

For those who are more in touch with the role of anger as a life-generating passion, Saint Paul is a helpful conversation partner. For what is his conversion if not the transformation of murderous rage against the Christians into the energy to preach the gospel to the whole world? His letters reveal further that the converting force of anger does not disappear. His irate communication to the Galatians is a helpful reminder that even the saved often need to be resaved.

Directors may also suggest at times that directees initially deal with their anger by writing a letter in the fashion of Paul, expressing their feelings to someone who has hurt or offended them. As most directees lack Paul's spiritual depth, however, we do not recommend sending or even saving those letters. Nevertheless, when such letters are brought to spiritual direction, they can be used to help the directee put his or her anger in a larger faith context, through a process of skillful questioning about how and where the letters reveal the directee's reliance on the power of God and not on the forces of his or her own vehemence.

Expressing Anger Appropriately. It is not enough to teach directees to identify anger and pray with it; they also need to identify its source and act on it. After directees have identified that they are angry and begun to pray about it, the Serenity Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi provides a structure for the later stages of discernment: "Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

The sources of anger in a person's life are myriad. For example, the reported situation may be only a spark that ignites earlier, unexpressed anger. Thus, it is important to determine what directees are actually angry about, to help them separate past hurts and injustices from present ones. If there is a significant amount of unexpressed anger in the directee's life, the director is well advised to refer him or her to appropriate professional help. Sometimes dealing with anger is best learned in a larger therapeutic context. Referring the directee, when appropriate, frees the director to focus spiritually on the same processes that will be dealt with in therapy from a psychological perspective. While a spiritual director may have a therapeutic effect on a directee by encouraging healthy thinking, the director's function is not to play therapist but to help the directee see how anger can become a positive force in the process of conversion. This entails a recognition of the differences and compatibilities between what is done in therapy and what is done in spiritual direction. While the basic phenomenon of addressing anger may be the same, the hermeneutics through which it is addressed are different.

The director's responsibility to assist the directee in addressing anger never ends with referral. The task remains of learning to express anger appropriately as a means of developing one's relationship with God by developing one's relationship with others. We will focus on three specific areas appropriate to spiritual formation here: developing the virtue of obedience, learning to lament, and developing the virtue of hope.

Anger and Obedience. Within the context of spiritual direction, the director can first teach the directee how to use anger as a positive force in the spiritual life by showing him or her its relationship to the virtue of obedience. Too often, directees are inappropriately docile in the face of authority figures. They cower before them, attempting to appease while inwardly seething with rage. That unexpressed anger, in consequence, spills over into their relationships with others in a variety of unhelpful ways. Rather than express their anger appropriately, they isolate themselves, becoming ministerial "lone rangers," or engage in passive-aggressive behaviors that subvert the larger ministerial task that originally led them to place themselves under another's authority. These behaviors mitigate against obedience because they are fundamentally expressions of a misunderstanding of that virtue.

Obedience is derived from the Latin *ob audire*, "to listen in front of" or "in return for." Obedience, therefore, is a matter of learning to listen intently. It presumes a positive, interactive relationship between the one in authority and the one under authority. In light of this, directees can use anger positively to learn to become more obedient in at least two ways. First, they can learn to help the leader lead. Second, they can learn to listen more attentively to the ways in which the Lord is demanding conversion in the directee's own life.

Helping the leader lead entails being assertive about one's own needs and/or issues. Doing so assists the leader in making informed decisions about how best to use the talents and limitations of the directee in service or ministry. At the same time, some directees—especially those in institutions that exhibit high hierarchical organizational structures or that are headed by leaders whose administrative style communicates distance—often find it difficult to express their anger at all, much less in a fitting manner. Understanding that communicating one's anger appropriately is a matter of obedience, however, frequently gives the directee courage and the proper perspective from which to approach the administrator.

Rather than whining about or trying to subvert the person in authority, the directee needs to communicate his or her anger as a means of assisting the leader in coming to see the details of the situation from the directee's point of view. Thus, directees need to learn to express their anger in a way that neither punishes, subverts, nor accuses, but seeks to solve the problem. Focusing on the issues that have given rise to the anger rather than on the authority figure goes a long way in beginning to express anger as a matter of obedience.

The director can further assist directees in communicating anger appropriately by reminding them of a few of the disciplinary principles of obedience. First, the director needs to recall for the directee the advice of Saint Paul: "Be angry but sin not. Do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph. 4:26). This is actually a twofold rule. On the one hand, anger needs to be expressed directly and without rancor. Hostile, punishing behavior only exacerbates the situation by putting the person with whom one is angry on the defensive. On the other hand, holding onto one's anger causes it to fester into deep-seated resentment that leads to attempts to destroy the other vengefully. While it may be necessary for the directee to engage in a variety of "cooling down" behaviors before addressing the issue, it remains necessary to address it in a timely manner.

Second, every human relationship demands a respect of one's own power and fallibility as well as those of the other. Expecting the person in authority to solve everything that is the source of anger is to put him or her in the position of a friend of ours who learned his fatherly limitations when his daughter brought him a popped balloon, crying "Daddy, fix it! Fix it!" Directees need to remind themselves that they are bringing the matter to the superior's attention precisely because they are together engaged in a common project. Keeping focused on how best to accomplish that common ministry helps avoid blaming the person in authority and enables the directee to approach the other in an appropriate and respectful manner.

Third, if directees approach the situation with the recognition that the solution may entail some conversion on their part, a great deal of the hostility that marks the inappropriate expression of anger immediately dissipates. Contributing to a solution not only entails articulating exactly what the problem is; it also demands the repenting humility of knowing that one may have been a part of the problem's creation and recognizing that one has a role to play in its solution.

There will be times when the superior will, for whatever reason, refuse to listen to the directee's complaints, no matter how appropriate they are or how well they are expressed. Directees need to remember that their duty in obedience is to express the problem directly, clearly, and without personal invective or attack. Sometimes there is nothing further they can do, no matter how willing they might be to do more.

In such situations, the director needs to underline for the directee that it is the action of expressing anger directly and appropriately, not the acceptance or nonacceptance of the other, that is empowering. A proper expression promotes the virtues of integrity and courage in the directee's life by turning him or her away from appeasing behaviors. Such behaviors suggest a reluctance to accept the fact that promoting and maintaining self-dignity are ways of offering reverence to God as our Creator. Self-dignity also empowers and impels the directee to love his or her neighbor more deeply, in obedience to the second great commandment. As this is often a difficult moment of conversion, the director will need to repeat this lesson often. As the lesson is learned, however, the directee will be freed enough to engage in the larger spiritual discipline of lamentation.

Lamentation. Serenity is the result of lamentation, not a condition for its possibility. Lamentation is a grieving process that must be undergone in the face of that which cannot be changed. As such, it entails

transforming the anger that arises because of harmful situations that cannot be changed. A glance at the Book of Lamentations reveals that this process of transformation utilizes anger in at least four ways.

First, the directee needs to express what the harmful situation is, both descriptively and emotionally, whether it be a feeling of helplessness before an unresponsive superior or frustration in the face of the world's suffering. The situation must be identified and described; not doing so leads to harmful secrets, like dead pets decaying in the living room, around which everyone walks but about which no one speaks. Expressing one's helplessness leads to recognizing that one does not need to bear the burden alone, allowing one to bear the cross with others rather than fashioning one's own. The response of one of our colleagues to a bereaved father—"I'm angry too, and I don't know what I am going to do about it"— was the key to opening the father's grief.

Second, the directee needs to admit responsibility for whatever role he or she has played in promoting the harmful situation. Such acknowledgment entails recognizing that one may be guilty, but that does not mean that one must also feel guilty. Feeling guilty is often a matter of unexpressed anger and betrays an unwillingness to engage with another. Being willing to repent, on the other hand, entails acknowledging one's involvement in the situation, even if there is nothing one can do to alleviate it but be with the other in his or her pain. This is as true in situations of direct personal responsibility as it is in situations where we share responsibility because of larger societal actions (e.g., the inability to find political solutions to such problems as pollution and racism).

Third, the directee needs to express faith in God, trusting that God will be God. At times this means reminding God that he is God, at least for our own sakes. Teresa of Avila's angry, passionate entreaty after a tumultuous chapter session is a good example of this reminding. She left the meeting, marching double time until she plopped herself in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Her prayer—"You promised peace. I want peace. And I'm not leaving until you give it to me"—at once expresses her frustration directly and acknowledges that some things can be done only by God. Only God can finally bring peace

to a troubled world, but that does not mean that we ought not to insist on it.

Teresa's last line reminds us of the final way in which anger plays a role in lamentation. While serenity is the result of lamentation, it does not mean that the anger disappears. Rather, it expresses itself in a patient abandonment. Knowing that something harmful cannot be changed doesn't mean that we disregard it, any more than fully grieving the loss of a loved one entails forgetting him or her. Instead, it finds its prayerful expression in the recognition that God always acts in his own way at his own time, even if we need periodically to remind him of what he already knows. We do this patiently, in a spirit of trusting abandonment, when we express our anger in a way that also expresses our confidence that somehow, in some way, God will work all things unto good. Such confidence never dissolves our anger into either whining or nagging. Rather, it insists that we believe in a God who providentially acts here and now in our lives. Remembering the anger within serenity avoids the inappropriate expression of anger that nurses grudges and nurtures resentment.

Such patient, trusting abandonment ultimately means that we live in hope. First and foremost, hope expresses itself in the conviction that God will manifest the fullness of his power in the coming of his kingdom. We do not know the hour, but we do know that our anger is always a sign of our deepest desire that he come in glory soon.
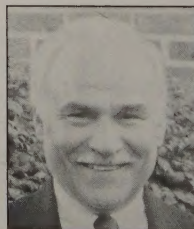
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